Out of Bohemia

Fosdick

For

Miss Julia A Morris

from

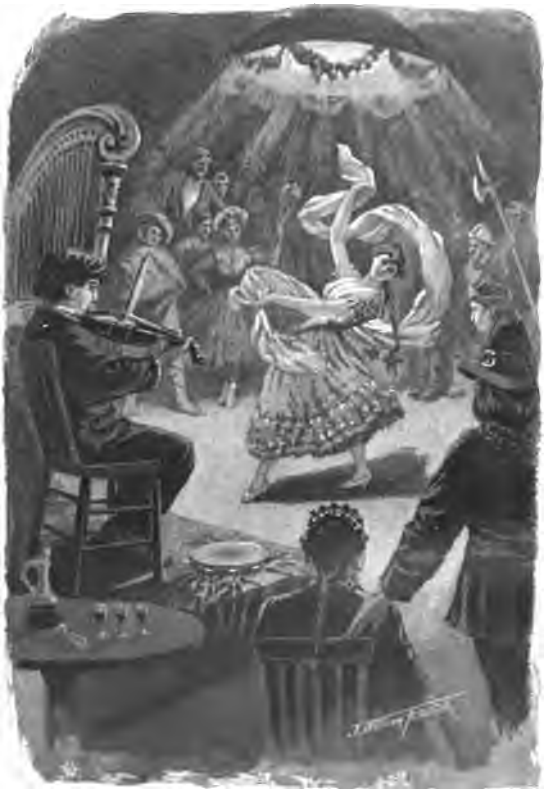
Her friend and Counsel

Jos: Christian

Nov 28th 1894

The author's Mrs Fredrick
Christian's is my youngest
daughter -

J. C.



OUT OF BOHEMIA

A STORY OF PARIS STUDENT-LIFE

BY

GERTRUDE CHRISTIAN FOSDICK

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To * * * *

OUT OF BOHEMIA

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INTRODUCTION

PARIS sparkles, dances, sings in the sunlight, but when bathed in tender moonlight she becomes weird, mysterious, poetic. This mystic light touches the towers of the Trocadéro, and cuts a silver pathway athwart the somber shadows of the winding Seine; lays its white hand on the noble brow of the Arc de Triomphe; glides in and

out among the trees of the Champs Elysées, and creeps solemnly from top to base of the obelisk in the Place de la Concorde; just tips the gilded figures of the Grand Opera, and loses itself in the glitter and dazzle of the Boulevards; rests like a benediction upon the tomb of the great Emperor; and steals, here and there, along the crooked little streets of the Latin Quarter, where our story opens to-night—this Bohemian quarter which has been for centuries the scene of the happy-go-lucky life of the student.

It is twelve o'clock. On the shadow side of the Rue Notre Dame des Champs two men are strolling in the free-and-easy style which bespeaks youth and the unrestraint engendered by a long and intimate acquaintance. They are both dressed in the careless art-student fashion of their class, and in this subdued light present much the same appearance. Both are well built and near the same height; both wear the high, flat-brimmed student hats, and have their hair

more or less long. Their hands are thrust well into the pockets of their trousers, and both are whistling a popular air of the Opera Comique, which they have just quitted. The street is almost deserted at this hour, and their steps echo loudly between the lofty walls of the narrow way.

"Hello! old Bougie is up late to-night," says one of them, glancing up at the windows of a tall house opposite — the residence of the immortal Bougereau. He stops to examine his watch in the moonlight which floods them as they emerge into the little Rue de la Grande Chaumière. "By Jove! twelve o'clock — I will be late for the ball."

"The ball!" muttered the other. "Better go to bed and be ready for work to-morrow. It is the *concours*, you know."

While they stand there in the full light of the moon, we may examine them more closely and note many differences unobserved in the shadow. They are both Americans by birth, but Georges Latour is

of French extraction, and his face and bearing testify that it is from this side of his house that he has inherited his features and characteristics. He is somewhat under medium height, but is so well proportioned that this deficiency would not be remarked. His face is of that pure oval which one rarely meets with outside of the idealized, and his broad, low forehead and short, brown beard exaggerate this ovalness. His features are a little too perfect to possess character; his mouth shows pronounced weakness, and his full red lips give a sensual expression, which would be decidedly displeasing were it not that it is modified by the gentle and almost childlike look in his dark eyes. Altogether his is a face which is described as beautiful rather than noble. Not a face to inspire trust, but one that it would be difficult not to admire, and dangerous to love. He is popular with men and women, especially the latter, and he knows it well.

His friend presents a marked contrast. He is larger, and gives one the impression of strength rather than beauty. His features are neither classical nor regular, but they are distinctly Anglo-Saxon, and although he wears his hair and beard like his companion, there is nothing of the Frenchman about him. A strong face, with a straightforward look in his honest gray eyes that invites confidence. A genuine American, masquerading for a time in the Bohemian atmosphere of the Latin Quarter, but losing none of the principles instilled in a country that recognizes freedom apart from license. Absorbed in his art, and intensely ambitious, he has been rather a looker-on than a participator in much of the *distraction* which the Latin Quarter art student allows himself; and although all agreed in calling Clay Sargent a regular good fellow, he was too reserved to be counted one of them. The friendship existing between Clay and Georges had commenced in America when

they were school-boys, and had continued uninterruptedly, which was due more to Clay's forbearance than from any strong congeniality, for they agreed only in a mutual love for their chosen profession.

"Better come along, old man, and see the ball; it is just at its height now. You are getting altogether too serious. All work and no play won't do, you know. A little amusement will only freshen up your work," said Georges, with that drawl which fascinated women and bored men.

"No, thank you, it is too late; I have a big day's work at my studio to-morrow; and besides, I am not invited."

Georges laughed.

"*Qu'est ce que ça fait, mon cher?* All students are welcome at the Colarrossi balls, and *I* have the right to invite you; so come along," and he put his arm through Clay's and hurried him toward an old doorway on the right of the Rue de la Grande Chaumière, over which some past student has

painted an elaborate sign-board, in which a skull surrounded by flowers grins down on the passers-by and the words "Academie Colarrossi" tells the public that they are passing that ultra-Bohemian art school.

"Well, I will look in for a moment," said Clay, compromisingly.

The young men enter with the air of habitués, pass through the tunnel-like passageway by the office of the concierge, and descend the short flight of steps that lands them in one of the oldest and most picturesque courtyards in all Paris. The moonlight is flooding one half of it now, and making the grotesque bits of statuary, the crumbling wall almost covered with daubs of paint (scrapings from countless palettes), the sunken well in the corner, and the ivy-covered doorway beyond, look more antiquated than usual. But in strong contrast to this quiet, world-forgotten old court is a brilliantly lighted studio window on one side and the strains of dance music within.

Georges pushes open the door unceremoniously and bids Clay enter. They pass through the dusty, dirty little room which serves as M. Colarrossi's office — but bears no such evidence except a broken-down desk in one corner, where monthly dues are taken, but which to-night is used to hold the wrappings of the dancers — and enter the studio proper. This is a large, square room with lofty ceiling. It is lighted by many gas-jets, covered with great, smoky tin reflectors, under which usually sits a crowded night-class, but which to-night presents a very different scene. The dirty walls are covered with studies of all kinds, carelessly attached with thumb-tacks — charcoal academy drawings from life, sketches in oil, pastel, and water-colors. In one corner of the room is a mass of easels and stools piled up until they nearly touch the ceiling, while stacks of green-backed portfolios hedge them in at the bottom.

As Georges and Clay enter, the crowd of

students around the door is so great that they can only force themselves inside the swinging-door.

Arrayed in fantastic costumes of all nations, many of them loaned from M. Colarrossi's costume class wardrobe, are French, American, English, Russian, Swedish and German students of both sexes. They are formed in a circle, the outer row standing on stools, and peering over one another's shoulders to the center of the room, where something of unusual interest is evidently transpiring, and, from the cries of "Bravo! Bravo!" which come from all sides, seems to be pleasing.

In one corner, enthroned upon the stand usually employed for models, sit three Italian street musicians, with two violins and a harp. They are playing one of De Metra's fantastic melodies with wild, half-savage accent.

"What is going on, Angelo?" asks Georges, addressing an old Italian servant at the door, who was once an organ-grinder in the streets

of London, but who has been for many years the model, slave, and good-natured butt of the Colarrossi students, with the sobriquet of Michael Angelo.

"It 's the *petite Espagnole*, monsieur, and she dances well," replied the long-haired Italian.

"Lend us your stool, Angelo." They are soon mounted, and from this elevation can see into the center of the room, where in the full blaze of the gas-jets a girl is dancing in a Spanish costume of black and gold lace. It was a striking scene: the circle of eager faces, the dingy walls, the flickering gas-jets throwing their fitful rays on the bright, flushed face, and glittering on the gold spangles of the dancer's dress, as she throws her body, first this way, then that, in the graceful movements of that most abandon of all dances, the Spanish cachucha.

There was nothing languorous, none of the mechanical rhythm of movement that rules and systems prearrange. It was the

natural grace of passion without its grossness. She danced as a child of the forest, who was only half conscious of its audacity, would dance among the red leaves in the glade. In whatever posture she assumed there was music. There was song in each inexpressibly graceful line and billow of limb and garment.

"By Jove! that pose was worthy of Carmencita herself," cried Georges, who had joined loudly in the cheers, and whose enthusiasm now burst forth as the dancer threw herself backward, arms extended over her head, and her lithe body gracefully following the movement.

"What say you, old man, was that not worthy of Carmencita?"

"Without her sensuality," said Clay, almost sadly. "This is the dancing of a merry, innocent child."

Georges' interpretation of the scene had impressed Clay disagreeably. The girl's fresh beauty seemed all out of place as the

prey to the admiring gaze of a set of Latin Quarter students, and open to the comments of such men as Georges Latour.

"I wonder who she is," mused Clay, watching her, seated on a high stool, panting a little from the exercise, her cheeks ablaze and eyes sparkling, as she accepted right regally the homage and congratulations of the students now crowding about her.

"What a picture!" cried Georges, craning his handsome throat for a better view of her beauty. "Come," he said, getting down from his lofty perch, "we must make her acquaintance." And, too much excited to notice that his friend remained behind, he started to elbow his way through the crowd. Stopping here and there to indulge in idle badinage with his many acquaintances, he sauntered up to the stool which was his destination with all the insolence of egotism, and, taking up her long, dark braid, he pressed it to his lips, murmuring:

"*Ah, ma petite Espagnole, que vous êtes charmante.*"

Instantly she sprang from the stool, her eyes flashing indignantly. "I am not your little Spaniard; I am an American, whom you will do well to respect."

Instantly Georges saw his mistake. He could not but understand the honest indignation in those deep blue eyes. He, libertine that he was, instinctively felt that Clay had been right — that this beautiful girl had only been acting a part in the masquerade; that her dancing, it mattered not how it affected his vulgar senses, had been the simple, joyous outburst of merry youth. The girl's face, however, soon lost much of its scorn, and assumed an air of interest, and even coquetry, as Georges offered his humble apologies, with bowed head. Few women could withstand the combined eloquence of his eyes and voice.

Clay had been an interested spectator to

this little scene. He had admired the indignation, and pitied the weakness which forgave the offense so quickly. A waltz was being played, and as he turned to go, a couple brushed by, and he recognized the laugh of the Spanish dancer, as the black lace and spangles whirled past him, in Latour's arms.

He let himself out of the door, and with a feeling of relief he crossed the silent moonlit court, muttering to himself, "Poor girl!"

PART I

IT was a gloomy afternoon in November. It had rained all day, and beautiful Paris was doing her best to look ugly. The clouds had not emptied themselves, but continued the same monotonous dripping. It was what people call a steady rain, not the sudden downpour that soon exhausts itself, but a hopeless, mean, drizzling rain,

such as often visits Paris in the latter days of autumn. Foot-passengers hurried by under dripping umbrellas, and coachmen swore at one another in their efforts to take advantage of the necessities of the public and earn an extra *pour-boire.*

If any pedestrian on the Boulevard Montparnasse had stopped to glance up at the window of No. —, third floor front, he might have seen a face in keeping with the dreary and depressing aspect of nature.

One would not have called the face handsome at any time, and certainly now the grave, troubled look in the gray eyes, which looked out in deep thought from under the frowning brows, gave him an expression almost morose. His mouth under his drooping mustache formed a hard line, cruel in its firmness. Strength, mental and physical, characterized his face and figure. He wore a short corduroy jacket with careless ease. His hands were clasped behind him, holding a cigar, which in the depth of his thought

he had forgotten to smoke. Gazing out on the dull, leaden skies, so still that he might have been a silhouette cut against the half-light from the window, Clay Sargent stood in a brown study.

The little room was a queer mixture of studio and bedroom. The walls were literally crowded with pictures that could not have been purchased at any shop in Paris, being his own sketches in charcoal at the academy, or last summer's outdoor studies from nature, ripped from their stretchers and tacked at random on the ugly wall-paper. The fire, left to itself, had burned to a handful of ashes, and on the rug before it a huge Irish setter stretched his shaggy form and slept heavily. For more than a quarter of an hour Clay Sargent had stood gazing abstractedly into the street, so intent on his own thoughts that he had forgotten to make a light or to replenish the fire.

"After all, what is it to me?" he said for the hundredth time, trying to put aside his

thoughts with these idle arguments, only to take up the thread again and endlessly review the whole pitiless story, in which he had had no real part, but which, by a strange dispensation of fate, had been acted before him.

"It is three days since I came back to Paris, and, struggle as I will, I cannot obliterate certain scenes which connect and emphasize important links in this story. Paris seems haunted by her presence. I hear her voice, feel her presence everywhere. The old atelier seemed lost without her. The smell of the violets from a flower-vender's basket on the quay recalled her. Her eyes looked at me from my canvas when I tried to work. Something there was in the free grace of a little child that ran across my path in the Champs Elysées which brought back her careless freedom of motion and happy unrestraint.

"Such little things seem most important now, since the time that I first saw her at

the students' ball. I spoke with her for the first time at the Grand Opera-house. The play I have forgotten; the music is as nothing to me; but the appearance of the girl, sitting in the shadow of the box-curtain, is indelibly impressed upon my memory. It was at Latour's invitation that I joined the party. I had lost sight of him after the ball, until one afternoon he strolled into my studio to announce triumphantly that he had obtained board in the house with the 'Spanish dancer,' and invited me to make a fourth at the opera party arranged for that evening. Madame Dubray, their landlady, had agreed to accompany them, and had engaged a small box in the third gallery for four. I went. I cannot forget the occasion. I recall madame's dark, wicked face, her fitful beauty, her eyes that flashed momentarily in scornful jealousy, and laughed in conscious self-content, and in three short hours ran the whole gamut of every expression of passion. Georges' hand-

some, nonchalant air. Certainly his is a handsome face, what the French call *la beauté du diable.* My long acquaintance with Georges in our native land had rendered me more charitable than some to his many weaknesses. I remembered him before Paris had too speedily developed the lower side of his nature. However, outside of his physical perfection he never impressed me with any great excellence, and I hardly felt inclined to excuse, on this ground alone, the mad passion which he inspired and maintained in at least one of the company present, and which manifested itself in the despairing glances which Madame Dubray lavished on this modern Adonis, without being in the least embarrassed by the presence of myself, a stranger.

"As for the fourth member of our party, I did not see her face until the end of the first act, so absorbed was she in the opening scene of 'Faust.' Georges did not introduce me to her, and she had not taken the trouble

to turn her head during my elaborate presentation to Madame Dubray and the idle, flattering remarks which characterize the opening of a French conversation. I had to content myself with the outline of her white throat and the exquisite auburn color of her loosely coiled hair, which I had last seen braided and swaying to and fro in the movement of the dance. The curtain went down on the first act amid a storm of applause, in which madame joined noisily, while mademoiselle manifested her enjoyment by a long-drawn sigh of content and an uplifting of her eyes to Georges'. He answered this glance with so much feeling, admiration, and even passion, that I wondered if she was conscious of what she was doing. Georges seemed to have forgotten his duties as host, and Madame Dubray was compelled to present me to Miss Beryl Carrington, when for the first time she turned upon me her personal regard.

"'Ah! you are the compatriot of whom

I have heard so often,' she said, graciously offering me her hand. Her manner had all the careless freedom of an American girl. What a gift is beauty to woman! Hers was indeed rare. To the natural charm of form and color she added expression. With all its brightness, no one could have studied her face and doubted her capability of intense feeling. Indeed, I remember to have felt even then a little sad in realizing her capacity for pain. I was impressed, as I had been at the ball, with a sense of her childlike innocence, and I felt that she was not as securely situated as one would wish a young, pure girl to be. Another instance of what I was constantly encountering in Paris, but never without a stunned amazement at the almost criminal credulity of my own countrypeople, who will confidently send their young girls to Paris alone, or improperly chaperoned, to study art, when they would not think of leaving them alone in New York. This inconsistency is only

paramount with the graciousness with which we accept everything foreign on a separate footing from our own.

"I resented the proximity of a woman so cold, so heartless, so worldly-wise as I believed Madame Dubray to be, from my first impression of her. Georges' too evident admiration seemed to me to endanger her still more.

"At the end of the second act Georges proposed that we should all go down to see the 'foyer,' to which the girl gave a ready consent; but Madame Dubray demurred, saying, for her part, she preferred to remain quietly in the loge to being buffeted about by a crowd; then, turning to me, she said, 'But perhaps monsieur will take mademoiselle down, and you, M. Georges, will stay with me?' She added this last in a tone and with a look that was meant to be coquettish, but which was lost on my friend, as he frowned sternly and looked at Miss Carrington to help him out of the difficulty. She, on the contrary, found the situation

most amusing, and, glancing roguishly at Georges' forlorn face, she accepted my proffered arm, and we left the box.

"Another occasion that stands out in my memory to-night was our visit to the catacombs. Madame Dubray had invited me to lunch, as we were to start directly afterward. Beryl was in her brightest mood, overflowing with life and merriment. Even Madame Dubray seemed to forgive her her youth and beauty, and joined in the peals of laughter which her merry repartee provoked. We were a happy party, and nothing marred our enjoyment of the meal. The day was perfect, and good-humor reigned on all sides, until we reached the entrance to the catacombs. Surely Beryl was the most whimsical of mortals. She was the last person one would have suspected of nerves, but in descending the dark stairway which leads to the subterranean vault she became possessed of a veritable

terror, and begged piteously to be allowed to remain behind. We were all more or less surprised at this in one apparently so fearless, and were somewhat incredulous, but Madame Dubray was incensed by it.

"'It is the height of folly!' she cried, angrily; 'there is nothing to be afraid of, and you are merely pretending fright. The crowd is too great to go back, and there is nothing to do but to descend. Come!'

"Just then I caught a glimpse of Beryl's face by the gleam of a candle, and was startled by its pallor and terrified expression. She was timid, then, this bright, sunshiny Beryl, and as afraid of the dark and the close, sepulchral atmosphere of this place as one might expect a nervous, ill woman to be. I could not reconcile it with her superb physique. But certainly it was no feigned fright; she trembled visibly, and, putting back her hand to Georges', who followed her, she clung to his arm desperately. Georges could not conceal his gratification.

I was surprised to see how much importance he attached to a simple impulse, believing that to her it meant nothing more than that he was human and the nearest person to her in her distress. But then Georges says I do not understand women.

"From that moment I noticed a difference in Madame Dubray. Until then I believe she had never thought that Beryl returned the passion that Georges manifested for her. From that time she began to suspect her of leading him on, and she hated her as only a Frenchwoman who is jealous can hate. Truly, it seemed a fit place for the birth of a great hatred, this dark subterranean passage under the great city, only lighted by the flare of our candles, as we made our way, mostly in single file, past the lines of grinning skulls and cross-bones which formed the walls of this ghastly place.

"Beryl had recovered from her fright on reaching the end of the stairway, where the

collection of candles could better illumine than in the dark, narrow descent; but, whether through her own fear or Georges' unwillingness to relinquish her, she made the passage with her arm through his, and Madame Dubray followed with me. What was passing in her mind was not expressed in words, but once when I caught the expression of her eyes fixed on these two, they showed so much malignant hatred and ferocious jealousy that I felt frightened for their safety. She did not trouble herself to talk to me, but was absorbed in her own intense feelings. Once, when in a narrow bend of the passage they were for a moment lost from our sight, and I heard Beryl's ringing laugh, 'There!' she said, scornfully, 'I told you it was all feigned, this fright. She likes to be made much of, that is all.' I tried to demur, but was met with such sharp denial, that I concluded it was best to say no more. Once more in the daylight, Beryl dropped Georges' arm, and ran back

to join us, all ignorant of the fury her little escapade had evoked.

"I was invited to take my Christmas dinner with Georges. He had said it should be our reunion after my trip to Fontainebleau, where I had been for some time painting a snow scene in the forest. I recall with what alacrity I accepted his invitation, and even felt very kindly toward Madame Dubray, as I wended my way to the little Rue Servandoni and up the long stairway that led to her apartment. A lonely man so dreads this season, and there is so much longing for home and something feminine. I pictured to myself our merry dinner in the little old dining-room, with its red lions climbing up the pattern of the black lace curtains, its many brass ornaments of pots and kettles which adorned the wall brackets, its ill-proportioned statue of Romulus and Remus nursed by the wolf, over the mantel, its heavy black furniture,

its low-hanging lamp over the table, with tawdry lace pending from its shade, under which Beryl and Georges were wont to glance amorously, when not detected, during the meal. All was as familiar as my own home — not that I had frequented it so often, but there are places, especially if connected with persons of interest, which impress themselves indelibly on the mind.

"How different from my anticipations was the evening when I made my unfortunate entrance on *part second* of a scene whose *part first* still remains a mystery to me.

"All the horrible scenes of that last night in which I saw her are engraved upon my memory, and cannot be erased. To-night, in trying to recall her laughter, which for me had more light and music and rhythm than any I have ever heard, I cannot. The more distinct impression of that last Christmas night comes between me and all else.

"Standing at her full height, her head

tossed aloft like an offended princess, her lips curling in concentrated and withering scorn, her eyes flashing their cruel indignation, and her cheeks ablaze with anger at the insults under which her whole being was quivering — I heard Beryl's voice, awful in its distinctness, saying, 'No, I will not leave this house. Until that man gives the lie to your insulting words, I stay here.' She was speaking to Madame Dubray and pointing at Georges, whose head was drooped in his beard, with an expression that at first baffled me. He seemed under the spell of a pair of demon black eyes that were fixed upon him. He struggled to speak, but said nothing. He was deadly pale, and his voice made a little gurgle in his throat. Beryl regarded him fixedly for some moments, as though by the intensity of her gaze she would compel him to speak. There was dead silence in the room.

"'*Coward!*' she hissed between her teeth. A coarse, triumphant laugh came from

Madame Dubray, and I felt myself with Georges pushed toward the door as madame led the way to the dining-room, but not before I had heard that despairing cry which haunts me day and night, and which rings in my ears now with the same thrill of agony as then — 'Clay, help me!'

"It was the first time she had called me Clay. It was something more like a prayer than a cry for help — a last appeal when all else had failed. Her whole suffering, crushed soul came to me in the low words as I was hurried past her, and I answered by a look intended to assure her that I was ready to aid her. But first I must understand to the uttermost this mystery, and I concluded that, as a guest of the house and an outsider to all that had occurred, it would be better to inform myself before I acted.

"I took my place with the others around the table, as in a dream. I noticed that Beryl's place, by a gesture from madame, was removed by the servant. This out-

break had been unexpected, then! Georges maintained the same embarrassed silence, his eyes alone flashing out quick, excited glances from his contracted brows. I noticed the cruel twitching of his white lips under his mustache. He looked like a man pushed to desperate straits and capable of desperate acts. The whole atmosphere of the place seemed heavy with suppressed emotion and excitement, that might break forth at any moment into a lively flame. Under these circumstances I felt it all the more my duty to keep calm, and act, if possible, as if nothing had happened. Madame manifested her excitement in loud talking and hilarious laughter, and, much to my annoyance, she addressed most of her remarks to me. The entrance of the two or three other boarders had relieved me a little. Georges kept his head bowed down and said nothing, seeming to be in profound thought, and Madame Dubray, in her ostentatious attentions to the boarders and in her in-

cessant chatter to me, had never ceased to cast quick, furtive, frightened glances at him.

"Through it all I heard ringing in my ears that despairing cry, 'Clay, help me!' and I planned to see her the moment this detestable dinner should be ended. I found myself comparing it to the other dinners where her presence had illumined the place and made it a veritable feast of pleasure. I tried to imagine her piquant face smiling at me from her place opposite, but always between me and it came that other despairing face I had passed in the corridor. I remarked that madame was making the wretched ordeal of dinner as lengthy as possible, always watching Georges, as if she feared what he might do at its close. I believe that during this never-to-be-forgotten dinner I for the first time knew how dear Beryl was to me. She had before been only the most bewitching little Bohemian I had ever known — the merriest

laugher, the gayest dancer, the most sympathetic poser for my sketches — the freest, gladdest, sweetest, but to-night, in her trouble, she became also the dearest, of women.

"The boarders appeared to have caught some of the infection of the overladen atmosphere, as they left the table as hastily as possible; and when the coffee was served only Georges, madame, and myself remained. He had eaten very little, but had repeatedly filled his glass, drinking in great gulps, as though this were his only salvation. He took up his glass now, and turning to me, for the first time, said in English, 'Clay, I have the honor to announce that I am fiancé to Miss Carrington. Will you drink her health with me?'

"My astonishment was cut short by madame, who, having caught the word 'fiancé,' divined the rest, and, laying her hand on my glass cried, 'Pardon, mon ami, it is not true, what he says. It is a lie, and I can prove it.' She laughed hysterically,

and, holding high her glass, she proposed the health not of 'les fiancés' but 'les amants,' then laughed that same distracted laugh which had so grated on me in the scene outside, and which startled me to a sense of how this woman was suffering.

"Just then Auguste entered, saying some one had called for mademoiselle—did madame know where she was?

"'In her room,' said madame, sternly, waving the man away.

"'I beg pardon, but mademoiselle is not in her room, and the concierge says she left a quarter of an hour ago with her baggage.'

"Georges rose from the table quickly. 'Gone!' he said, turning as white as a sheet. 'Where has she gone?'

"'I don't know, monsieur, I am sure,' and Auguste left the room.

"Every one had risen by this time. Madame put her hand on Georges' sleeve; he shook it off as if it had been the touch of a serpent.

"'This is your work!' he said, fiercely, turning on the shrinking woman. 'But I will find her if it takes my lifetime, and she shall be avenged.'

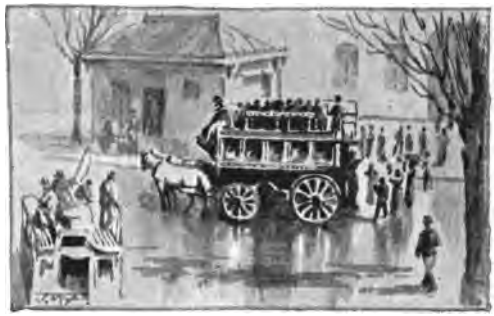
"'Georges, stay with me—do not leave me! We can be so happy now—stay with me!' She stretched out her arms to him and tried to cling to him, but he threw her from him.

"'Curse you!' he said, 'it is all your work. I was a man—you have made me a dog, a cowardly cur; but your reign is ended to-night.'

"She sprang toward him, crying, 'But I love you, Georges! Think how I love you!' He turned, caught her hands in his, and hissed through his teeth, 'And I—I—hate—you!' then rushed madly from the room, while madame fell unconscious at my feet.

"Then I went on my prolonged trip through Spain, principally to study the paintings of Velasquez, and heard nothing of the actors in this scene. I have been in

Paris three days now, and am settled in my new studio in a new quarter; but the atmosphere seems invaded by a memory of those days that I have not been able to shake off by a change in location."



PART II

CHAPTER I

IT had rained in the morning, but toward midday the sun had made feverish attempts to show itself amiable. The pavement was still wet from the heavy fall of the morning, but dried off here and there with little pools of water still standing in the hollows of the asphalt. It was nearly five

o'clock, and the busy world at the corner of the Rue du Bac and the Boulevard St. Germain were on the *qui vive* for means of returning home, the crowd being very great in that quarter because of the proximity of the well known Bon Marché, which has always been such a popular resort for the rich and the poor of Paris. Many carried small parcels bearing the name of the great *magasin*, and the dragged, weary look of the bearers testified to several hours spent in the push and crush of that most wonderful of shops. The omnibus office was beset with demands for *numeros*. Many heavy omnibuses and loaded tramways had rumbled away with the holders of fortunate numbers, leaving many more to wait for a more successful encounter with the next. Many had the hopeless expression that tells of weary waiting, and had retired to the station to sit in a dreary row around the walls; others walked impatiently up and down, looking in all directions for another chance of reaching

their destination. All looked more or less tired and disgusted.

On the bench in front of the station, wrapped in a long cloak which was unmistakably English, holding carelessly in one hand a green ticket, No. 123, sat a young woman of about twenty-two years of age. From the thoughtfulness of her expression she might have been more; from the childishness of her attitude she might have been less. She held her umbrella in her right hand, and with the point she idly drew figures of birds and animals, tracing the drops of water from the little hollows on to the dry asphalt. She was seemingly absorbed in this childish occupation and oblivious to all around her, when — splash went a foot on a really creditable drawing of a horse in full gallop.

"*Quel dommage!*" said a burly Frenchman, who, sitting next her, had apparently become absorbed in the result of these sketches, as he glared angrily at the passer-

by who had so suddenly erased one of them.

"Oh, pardon, madame!" said the young man in very Anglican French. "I am so sorry!"

"It is nothing," said Beryl, for it was she, blushing a little with annoyance at finding herself the center of observation. Just then the Passy-Louvre tramway came in sight, and there was the usual rush for places.

"Numbers 121, 122, 123!" cried the conductor. "*Une place seulement.*"

"One twenty-four!" cried the destroyer of the sketch, holding up his number.

"One twenty-three!" cried Beryl, holding up hers.

"Pshaw!" said he, with evident irritation, and, calling a cab, he gave the address 41 Boulevard Malesherbes, as the "tram" moved away with Beryl on the platform.

"Forty-one Boulevard Malesherbes," thought she. "How strange! We have the same address, then."

Arrived at the pension, Beryl made her way to her own room. She gave a little sigh of content as she opened the door and saw a bright fire burning. The better to enjoy her seclusion, she turned the key in the lock, took off her damp wraps, and, having ensconced herself in a warm robe-de-chambre, she sat down on the rug in front of the fire, resting her elbow on the seat of the arm-chair. Sometimes her forehead puckered itself into a little troubled frown; sometimes the hand that supported her head dug its fingers into the rosy palm, and she bit her lips a little cruelly. Turning her head, she caught a glimpse of her reflection in the *armoire glace* opposite.

"Beryl dear," she said to her image, in a childish, caressing tone, "you are to drop the Bohemian and play the grande dame now." Then with a sudden impulse she leaned forward and placed her sweet, rosy lips to the cold lips of the reflection. "I am so sorry for you!" she went on, in the

same childish fashion. "You meant no harm, and you have had to suffer so much!"

On that fateful night when she had received the first insult ever hinted against her womanhood, smarting with indignation and stunned by the first awakening to a sense of the humiliating cowardice of the man she had trusted and even loved, her sole idea had been to escape from her hateful surroundings. Her one desire was that she might never again look into the face of her would-be betrayer, or the woman whose horrible laugh of triumph still rang in her ears. Her one definite determination had been to leave that place at once, without an idea where to go; but as she flew about her room madly throwing her belongings into her trunk, her eye fell on a card which a girl at the drawing-academy had given her, with the address, prices, etc., of the "Artists and Governesses' Institute." She had taken it idly, never dreaming that she

should need it; but in her present climax the little card seemed providential. "I will go there," she decided, without a moment's hesitation; and so she did.

It is true that she felt herself regarded somewhat suspiciously by the good English ladies who matronized that excellent "Institution for unchaperoned English-speaking girls studying in Paris." Her unexpected arrival at so late an hour, her evident youth and beauty, aroused the inquiring genius of these prudent minds. But when Beryl presented her credentials in the form of a commendatory letter from the American minister, their scruples were overcome, and she was taken into the austere precincts of that most decorous institution. She found it a sanctuary of peace to her bruised spirit, and finally won her way into the uncompromising citadel of the hearts which do not open their portals freely, but, once having passed the rampart, are indeed strongholds of sincerity.

At first she was too absorbed in her own thoughts to care to make friends; and there were very few girls there who would have proved congenial to her. She soon gave the impression that she preferred her own thoughts to their company, and so she was allowed to indulge them. She had sought the place as a refuge until she could find some other, and she soon began to weary of its boarding-school discipline and its many rules and regulations, which restricted her on every side. She only waited to regain her strength, which had greatly suffered from the nervous shock she had received, to seek another pension. She was compelled to give up her academy work, and her horror of encountering Georges Latour, who she felt sure would seek her, made her all the more willing to make a recluse of herself. No prison could have afforded her a more secure refuge from her pursuer, for it was a law of that exemplary house that no man—except the carefully selected medical

and spiritual advisers, who, it is true, could scarcely be classed under that head—ever crossed the threshold.

In making the next change in her surroundings Beryl determined to choose something as unlike Madame Dubray's as possible, and she found it in the boarding-house of Mrs. Sanderson on the Boulevard Malesherbes, where we now find her.

She was feeling a little lonely in this great house, where she knew no one, having arrived only the day before. Suddenly there came to her a remembrance of the young man she had seen at the omnibus station, and the singular coincidence that he had given the same address. She wondered if she should see him at dinner.

At the Institute she had at first felt too stunned, and afterward too ill, to understand all that had happened, and she now tried for the first time to review and appreciate the great difference that would be made in her life. She realized that she had been

imprudent, foolish, misguided, but she could not see that there had been wrong on her part. She acknowledged that in adopting Bohemia as her home and allowing herself a free enjoyment of its privileges she had not calculated as to how those privileges might be misinterpreted by others. She was an American, and she had tried to continue to live in Paris under the same rules of freedom which her own country commends. She was only one of many who have tried the same policy with the same deplorable results. American girls in Paris forget too often that the French do not measure them from an American, but a French, standard of excellence. Beryl saw it all now. How cruelly she had been misjudged! And the blood rushed to her face as she realized that not only had this Frenchwoman misunderstood her, whose insane jealousy might have been her excuse, but *he* to whom she had acknowledged her love —he, too, had dared to misjudge its purity,

as manifested by his cowardly silence. "My God!" she said, "what an escape I have had! If there ever has been a deluded, foolish soul left to her own caprices, stranded, alone, and almost lost, it was I. And I intended to give my life to this man! Of what was I thinking? But how could I know that he was capable of such dastardly cowardice!" She went to a cabinet on the corner of her mantel, and, turning the key, took from it the small golden circle which had been given her by Georges, and which she, poor child, had considered her engagement-ring. She looked at it now with loathing. She had already burned everything that could suggest Georges, and this only remained to remind her of a never-to-be-forgotten folly. She intended to throw it, too, into the glowing coals; but no, it might not melt, and then it could be found with its tell-tale inscription. It would be better to throw it into the river, that knew how to keep the secrets confided to it. She

put it back slowly into its case and locked the cabinet. She intended to be brave, to bury and, if possible, to forget that miserable past. It is indeed a pitiable thing when the sweetness of a long chain of tender associations is obliterated in one dark experience which leaves the whole but a painful memory.

CHAPTER II

HAVING reaped the folly of a life in Bohemia, Beryl intended to be careful to produce a favorable impression in the very different surroundings in which she now found herself. She dressed with more than ordinary care, that nothing in her attire might offend the most critical. She was not vain, but she appreciated the advantages

which nature had bestowed on her. She had been well pleased with the beautiful reproduction of herself which Clay had painted, and during her short love-dream had enjoyed Georges' extravagant admiration of her personal charms. But even her beauty she considered a thing of the past now, as her late illness and self-conflict had deprived her of much of her old brilliancy of coloring, and her eyes had a new thoughtfulness of expression, and even sadness. She did not regret the loss; it had brought her nothing but trouble, she thought; but she only craved that perfect health and careless happiness which had been hers before she knew the meaning of sleepless nights.

There were times when she felt so discouraged that she thought seriously of giving up all she had hoped and struggled for in coming to Paris to study art, and returning to America. But her resolute spirit always gained the ascendancy and came out of these battles with the firm decision that

anything was better than a return to the loveless, colorless, uncongenial life she had so gladly quitted two years before. For America to her meant life in a rough Western manufacturing town, where her only surviving relative, a half-sister, lived.

After the death of the aunt who had reared her, and the old Virginia homestead was sold, Beryl had been compelled to go and live with this sister, who was old enough to be her mother and had lost interest in the child she had left to her aunt's care so many years before. She had so thoroughly imbued herself with her practical, humdrum surroundings that she found it impossible to follow the workings of a romantic, artistic soul like Beryl's, and often blamed Aunt Dora for what she called her queer ideas; and it must be acknowledged that Aunt Dora had instilled into her young charge much of that Southern romance which is so charming when guarded and so dangerous when unprotected.

After a year of this life Beryl had determined to take the portion her aunt had left her and go abroad to study art, from which determination her sister had tried but feebly to dissuade her, while her brother-in-law held her Old-World artistic feeling in contempt. But in the conviction that Aunt Dora would have approved of her resolution, as she had been proud of her talent and had ever encouraged it, Beryl braved the present opposition and had set out with delight to follow her heart's desire. Aunt Dora's money could not, she thought, be better used than in fitting her with so congenial an occupation to use when it was gone. And she had felt so strong and happy in the life she had chosen, so ready to meet and battle with any and all difficulties until now! She wondered at her lack of spirit, forgetting that spirit in a woman generally means physical health. She had not realized the existence of a nervous suffering temperament until this first shock made it apparent.

Beryl had well chosen her new home. Madame Sanderson, although English, had for years kept a pension in Paris which she prided herself had always been known as one of the best. Her guests from across the channel had never descended below the upper-middle class. The American element, we must admit, had been more distinguished for money than position. By the French it was considered an excellent place to learn English, and some queer specimens of this nationality presented themselves there, taking a vow on entering to speak no word of their own tongue, and imposing very funny English on the rest of the company. Two or three Spaniards, Canadians, Germans, and a Russian count besides the English and Americans made up the present company. The salon was a long room with a fireplace at one end. Its furniture was in somewhat faded old-gold plush and black ebony. The floor was of that polished wood which is distinctly Parisian, with here

and there Turkish rugs seemingly placed at random. The walls held one or two creditable water-colors, photographic reproductions of some of the gems of the Louvre, with two pastels of the Misses Sanderson at the respective ages of six and eight.

The second gong had not yet sounded for dinner when Beryl entered. The lights, with an eye to economy, were always kept low until after dinner, but the firelight gleamed brightly and touched with renewed brilliancy the faded gold of the *étagère*, the legs of the ebony table, the cornices, the mirror frames, and indeed everywhere there had been gilding in its best estate, and which time and wear had dimmed.

The room was unoccupied except by an old gentleman with soft gray hair and ruddy complexion, blue eyes somewhat prominent, with that misty tearful effect which bespeaks age. His air was distinguished, and he made a sweet picture sitting in the arm-chair with the firelight lovingly touching his silvery locks.

"Frederica dear, has the post come in?"

Receiving no answer, he turned his head slowly.

"Ah, I beg your pardon, I beg your pardon, my dear," and he tried to raise himself by the arm of his chair.

"Pray do not disturb yourself," said Beryl, placing her hand gently on his sleeve. "I am not Frederica, but may I not do something for you? Shall I go down to the bureau and inquire for your letters?"

Beryl had an innate tenderness for old age, and this old gentleman with his courtly air and evident feebleness attracted her. He was an old inmate of Madame Sanderson's house, having done the honors there for years. Strangers were his special care; every one was happier and felt more at home for knowing Mr. Murphy. He called all women "my dear," from the oldest old maid to the youngest débutante. He had been made the confidant of many love-affairs, and considered himself *au fait* in

giving advice on these delicate subjects. One sight of Beryl roused both his curiosity and interest. He felt she would be an acquisition to the house, which he told her in very gallant terms, hoped she would feel at home, praised Mrs. Sanderson and her house, and introduced her to his wife and daughter Frederica, who had come in.

After dinner Beryl wished to go to her room, but they insisted that she should come and play *petits chevaux* with the rest of the young people in the salon; so she assented, thinking it would be best not to seem exclusive. This mimic race-course was very popular, and the table was surrounded by those either taking part or looking on. Beryl, who had often played baccarat with the students in the Quartier Latin, found herself wondering what her new-found friends would have thought if they could have looked in on some of those merry games. She was smiling a little grimly at these reminiscences and the incongruity of her pres-

ent surroundings, when she was aroused by hearing Miss Sanderson call out:

"Oh, there is Mr. Bertram! Come and join us; there is a place for you here." Then petulantly, "That evening suit again! You are going out, as usual."

Beryl looked up, and recognized the destroyer of her drawing at the omnibus station. He appeared about twenty-eight years of age. His dark hair was closely cut over a forehead of unusual whiteness, a pair of intelligent dark eyes, and a straight, rather long nose. A face calm, cold, and colorless, except for the red lips half hidden under a soft, dark mustache. At present his expression was that of boredom. His elegant dress-suit fitted a superb figure, and his ease of manner expressed a familiarity with the best society. His appearance struck Beryl as the very reverse of the men she had seen in the Latin Quarter, and she was much surprised when she heard that he was an artist.

Mr. Bertram seemed in no hurry to join

the would-be gamblers, and stood looking on at the players, apparently little entertained by that or anything else. Indeed, he gave the impression of a type of the *jeun homme ennuyé.* He was turning away, when his eyes encountered Beryl. He stopped with a feeling of interest awakened by recognizing a face passed in a crowd and trying to determine where he had seen it. He could not succeed, but the face attracted him strongly, because it was beautiful, and because this singling out of attractive features was a part of his profession and his life.

He suddenly changed his mind and said he would play, taking the seat Miss Sanderson had offered him. It was at least an excuse to look at her, he thought; and as he was a much courted addition to the drawing-room, the game went more merrily than before.

Once, twice, three times Beryl had won. "If you go on at this rate you will break us," said Frederica, laughing.

"I will not play again," said Beryl, rising and pushing back her chair. "It is not fair, hardly honest, to win always. What does the winner do to recompense the others?"

"Kiss the turner," said Mr. Murphy, and every one laughed, as he occupied that distinguished position. Beryl joined in the laugh, and then, bidding good-night to her new acquaintances, went up to her own room, feeling less lonely for the accession of her new-found friends.

Her departure had been the signal that she might be discussed. Her beauty, her charm, her toilet all went the rounds. A curious longing to know more of the newcomer prompted Harold Bertram to remain in the salon longer than was his wont. His presence was so unusual that it created a little stir of interest. He was highly appreciated in the pension, as it was well known that he studied art for art's sake, having already an enviable bank-account, and several

mamas had an eye to the eligibility of the young artist as a desirable *parti* for her daughter. Even Mrs. Sanderson had nourished such thoughts in her motherly head in regard to her eldest daughter, who was not without attractions. The fact that Mr. Bertram remained in the salon after the closing of the game must mean something. The something was accounted for in widely different ways by these respectable matrons, each one feeling duly convinced in her own mind, and pitying the simplicity of dear Mrs. X——, who evidently thought it was due to the charms of her especial charge.

Harold, having listened till the conversation changed from the discussion of the new arrival, took his departure, and still had the subject of the conversation in mind as he was rapidly wheeled away to the ball at the Countess Y——'s.

CHAPTER III

A CELEBRATED American author has said that in the creation of man God has permitted two of each nature, and, if one might find him, there exists in this mundane sphere another self for each of us. Philosophers tell us that our souls travel in parallel lines and can never touch, however near together, except at the great center — God.

However these things may be, we all know from experience the delights embodied in the word "congeniality." This Beryl enjoyed in her intercourse with Harold Bertram. His artistic nature, his changeful moods, his heights, his depths, his every feeling and thought found echo in her own. The close of each after-dinner talk in the salon found this mutual attraction more strongly felt, their growing friendship and regard more strongly cemented. Harold began to refuse invitations to card-parties, receptions, and balls, which for lack of a better way to spend his evenings he had formerly accepted—for he had many acquaintances in the American colony—and passed his evenings at his hitherto dull boarding-house instead. He found Beryl different from all the women whom he had known in society. She had a fresh originality which charmed him, and his interest was continually piqued by the fact that he had not quite solved her. She never hesitated to express to him her

feelings on all subjects, but he noticed that her conversation was never personal as to experiences, and that she never touched on her past, into which he did not try to force an entrance, but would have felt privileged to go. Her manner had the artlessness of a child with the reserve of a woman. He never tired of looking into her beautiful eyes, where he reveled in a new wonderland. Each changing expression he found more charming than the last. Hers were in truth eyes that spoke. Harold told her many stories of his life in America and Europe, for he had been a great traveler, and her eyes formed the running accompaniment to all that he said. He often read to her, and her appreciation was so keen and sympathetic that he found a double pleasure in his favorite authors.

And Beryl, what were these days to her? Where was she drifting? What did it mean to her? When she stopped to think, she realized that she was happy, and wondered at it.

But youth is forgetful, and hers was a nature that lent itself to happiness naturally. She only knew that life seemed very sweet, not with the old freedom from care, but more deep, more abiding, and more satisfying than any happiness she had known. She had been happy without knowledge or question; now she was happy with the knowledge and appreciation of her good fortune which comes with maturer joys. She only knew that she possessed a great abiding content that permeated all her being. Never for one moment did she analyze its cause. If any one had suggested to her that she loved the man who was gradually becoming her daily companion, she would have refuted this as altogether untrue. Love to her had meant something so different from this sense of rest and sympathy, this sweet companionship, in which all her better senses were satisfied, that she could not have connected these two sentiments under the same term. To have likened that mad, childish, passion-

ate adoration for one whom she had now learned to despise bitterly, to this pure, elevated friendship which she felt for her friend Harold, would have been to desecrate it. She only knew that the earth had become very lovely to her, that God's air seemed good to breathe, that she felt kinder and nobler and truer than ever before, that her ideals grew grander, her sentiments more exalted, and her longings more intense. Day followed day and left her in the enjoyment of her new-found joy, nameless yet existing, acknowledged but not questioned. We must get away from a picture in order to see its greatest defects or its greatest beauties; so it is in the history of our lives. We only realize what is meant by an experience when we stand sufficiently away from it to look it full in the face. Beryl had realized this fact in regard to her old life. Its countless errors and strange mistakes she wondered she had possessed the folly to commit, forgetting that then, as now, she

had been carried on by the force of the present, too absorbed to think or to care about what it might mean in its dénouement. Georges' character grew more and more distasteful to her as she had time to look back and see how selfishly he had disregarded appearances for her. She did not know that her contempt for Georges was increased by her growing admiration for another and widely different character. Harold was her friend; he had told her so many times in the months that she had now known him. Her ideas of friendship became so high that she wondered how people could wish for more. Harold told her that only the highest natures could fathom all that a true friendship meant, and she believed that through him she had been permitted to be one of these.

They made many happy excursions together, Harold telling her the history of the interesting points and places. They reveled together in the treasures of the Musée de Cluny, they listened entranced to the grand

music at Notre Dame and the Madeleine. They wandered through the parks and Bois, and sat under the trees in the garden of the Tuileries. All Paris was beginning to have new associations for her. Living in a totally different quarter, she seldom frequented the old paths, and she hoped to obliterate old associations in the new. But she did not always succeed in this. Her nature was peculiarly sensitive to the influence of associations, and there were times when such little things brought all back with the poignancy of an old grief newly awakened. At such times her face, which had been Harold's pleasant study ever since she came into his life, changed so perceptibly that he wondered again and again what lay beneath the surface of her reserve, which in all her moods, be they gay or sad, never left her. He felt like one who can watch the grand spectacle, hear the discourse, listen to the music, be fascinated before the footlights, but can never get behind the scenes. He

had too much finesse and too much appreciation of the delicacy of her nature and the great part that she gave him freely, to pry behind the curtain she set between them; but none the less he felt hurt that he could get no nearer and fathom the look of unutterable sadness that he sometimes saw in her eyes. At such times he felt left out of her life, and it annoyed him. It was the check-rein that held him back when he might have lost his head and asked for something more than this platonic friendship, dear as it was. But he hated mystery. His own life was a clear, open page. All who wished might read. He was not only American, but intensely Bostonian. Nurtured in the purity of a New England home, there still remained in him something of the Puritan. He adhered with an old-fashioned simplicity to the traditions of his youth, and one of them was that the woman he asked to be his wife must have had no past. Yet he freely acknowledged that she was the

most congenial spirit he had ever encountered.

He loved to talk to her of his art, always finding her most sympathetic.

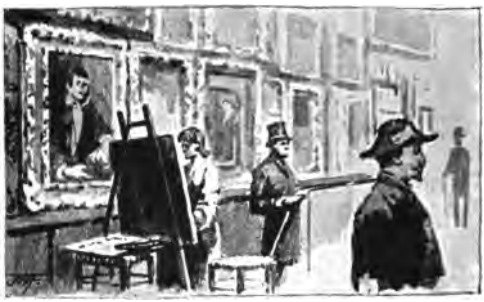
He told her about his great effort which had for many months been maturing in his brain, and which he hoped to finish for the next salon, and of his difficulties in finding models. He wished to paint a scene taken from Hawthorne's "Marble Faun." When he had gotten her deeply interested he asked her as a great favor to pose for him. This, for some undefined reason, she did not wish to do, and put him off from time to time; but he always hoped she would yield some day, and he felt that day would crown his artistic ambition, as she realized all his ideas of Miriam.

One evening he came up to her after dinner flushed with pleasure.

"I have made a great *coup* to-day," he said, feeling sure of her interest. "I met a fellow at the Art Students' Club who will

make an ideal model for my character of Donatello. I had to use the utmost diplomacy to get him to pose for me, but finally he consented. He is perfection; nothing could be better. Just the perfect type of animal beauty, minus a soul, that Hawthorne describes. He does not seem happy, but as I will paint Donatello after his fall, not before, he fits the place perfectly. I consider myself most fortunate."

After that Harold threw himself heart and soul into his art, always telling Beryl of his day's work and its success, and giving her such graphic accounts of his model, his beauty and his recklessness, that she began to feel an interest in him on her own account.



CHAPTER IV

"YOU love the old masters," said Harold, leading Beryl into the long corridor-like room which every lover of the Louvre knows as being devoted to past greatness. "Somehow I always think of Longfellow's lines

. . . the grand old masters,
. . . . . .
Whose distant footsteps echo through the corridors of time,

when I enter here," Harold went on, his face lighting up with that enthusiasm which all true lovers of art possess when among their idols.

"You are loyal to America, even in your quotations," said Beryl. "Do you know, your enthusiasm for our native land shames me a little, as I fear I have lost sight of it somewhat in my sojourn in the Old World."

"At least your enthusiasm for the South remains," said Harold, with a twinkle in his eye, recalling some lively tilts they had had on the subject.

Beryl smiled. "No, but truly, I admire your attachment to every and all things American. The fact that your great picture is to be illustrative of an American author pleases me."

Harold's face changed quickly.

"My great picture?" he said, dreamily. "*Cela depend* —"

"Upon what?" said Beryl.

"Upon you," he said, with a strained feel-

ing. "You cannot know, you cannot quite understand how much it means to me. Oh, if you would only pose for me, I feel sure all would be gained!"

"Oh, that dreadful question again!" laughed Beryl. "Everything comes back to that. How many times am I to tell you that I never posed for but one picture, and that I never intend to pose for another? There, you are beginning to frown and look too desperately in earnest. Let 's go back to the ancient arts and enjoy these while we may," she said, stretching out her arms to the treasures which covered the walls on either side.

They spent a happy hour together discussing enthusiastically the merits of their favorite masters, and living in an absorbed artistic atmosphere which only those can enjoy who really feel the sublimities of high art. Then they by mutual consent drew into one of the embrasures of the great windows which overlook the Seine, and

their talk became more general. Beryl gazed for a long time dreamily out at the beautiful panorama that stretched before her, and her eyes rested long and tenderly upon the quiet river which flowed so noiselessly under its many bridges, like some quiet, unobtrusive nature doing its duty to all and offending no one. It recalled so many things to Beryl, this river — such happy excursions she had made on the little hirondelles in the pleasant spring and summer weather. Then, too, Georges had rowed her here on moonlight nights; and in looking at it now she heard again her own merry laughter, which seemed to her as the echo of a dead song. As these thoughts proceeded her expression gradually changed from that of quiet, sweet repose to something like keen suffering. It all seemed so plain again — the moonlight, the river, and her own white hands held in the water; the strong, manly shoulders that bent this way and that in guiding the oars, sometimes bringing the

curly brown head, as beautifully molded as a Grecian god's, close to her own. Now in her thought she seemed so distinctly to hear his voice, to feel his hand upon hers, his breath against her cheek, that with her present sense of repulsion toward all that concerned him she could bear it no longer, and turned abruptly away from the window and river. Harold, who had been watching her face, was relieved when she came back to the present.

"Tell me what it is," he said. "I am near you and yet not with you. Are we not good friends? May I not know more — all of your life?"

"Surely you know enough of me," she answered, quickly. "Why should you wish to know my past? We are friends, and we have been happy together. If need be, forget that I ever had a past, forget that I ever lived until now. Would it not be complimentary to think so?" she ended gaily, looking up at him.

Harold did not like the evasion, but he answered:

"Ah, I should be so happy to think so if I could! There is something you do not tell me—something that is dear to you, perhaps," he added, slowly.

"No; our minds are not slates that can be wiped off with a moist sponge when we do not wish to retain the impressions. But believe me," she said, gravely, placing one gloved finger against her brow, "there is nothing here that I would not willingly blot out. I do not say that there is not much pleasure, but there is more pain. Do not let us speak of it," she said, imploringly, putting her hand on his sleeve.

Just then a party of artists from the Quartier Latin, wearing their most distinctive hats, some with long hair and coats a little greasy, all with the far-away expression for which astronomers and artists are peculiar, passed the alcove. They were absorbed in the discussion of the respective merits of

the Flemish and Italian schools, and were so emphatic in this discussion that they began to attract some notice. Beryl, who had her back turned to the visitors, was struck by the intonation of a certain voice in this company, and instinctively turned to see them. They were only a moment in passing the range of her vision, but it was long enough for her to recognize Clay. The same firm step, the same honest turn of countenance, the slight stoop of the shoulders, the length of limb, the strength of outline — in a word, Clay; it could be no other. Instantly the blood chased from her cheeks to her heart and back again. A swarm of recollections overpowered her, a great dread that another might be in his company; but a lengthened gaze after them decided that she was mistaken.

Clay was in Paris, then! A longing to speak to him came over her — the only connecting link with her past that she had seen for many months. She recalled that

last terrible night when as a last resource she had cried to him for help; and although he had not been able to succor her, she had realized the kindness of his regard and the magnanimity of his intentions.

"They are students from the Latin Quarter," said Harold. "A queer lot some of these fellows are. I suppose you know nothing about them; but I have been in the academy with them, and could tell you some strange tales of their lives and amusements."

"I know nothing about them," thought Beryl — "I who have lived with them, danced with them, worked with them, played with them?" She could have laughed aloud, first at the incongruity of this remark, and secondly because she was too unused to playing a part not to feel the need of reaction.

Clay was in Paris! All the way on their homeward journey she could think of nothing else. How good it would be to see him

again! She began to plan to see him or write to him; but she suddenly remembered that she did not know his address. The last she knew of him he had given up his studio and gone to Spain.

CHAPTER V

SOME days later Beryl was hurrying along the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, when she heard her name called, and, looking back, discovered Harold in full pursuit of her.

"What a chase you have given me!" he said, laughingly, shaking hands. "I have followed you all the way from the Made-

leine." This was a rare meeting, for as the ladies breakfasted in their rooms at the pension, and as Harold lunched near his studio, he never saw Beryl until the evening, except on Sundays.

"Never tell me again that you are not energetic," he said, fanning himself with his hat as they paused in the shadow of a great building.

"I was afraid I was late for lunch."

Harold looked at his watch. "So you are!" he exclaimed, triumphantly — "much too late to go home; so you will have to lunch with me. Come, I know such a jolly little place near here, which claims to be a *Restaurant Américain*, and has an eagle and flag over the doorway. I am sure we could be so happy there — or *I* could if you will come."

Beryl laughed. "You tempt me; but —"

"No, I will take no excuse. Think how you have made me run up-hill on this warm day to capture you! Surely you owe me compensation!"

The arrangement offered so many more attractions to Beryl than lunch at the pension with the same row of uninteresting faces opposite, that she finally yielded, and they were soon seated at a little white-draped table behind the green screen of the "American Restaurant"—which was American only in name. It was a plain little place, but very neat and attractive. The white window-curtains with the geraniums and canaries gave it an air of cheerfulness. A hand-organ outside was playing gaily the Boulanger March. A little girl reached up to the window to know if *madame* did not wish some roses. Harold purchased a great bunch to adorn the little table. The *côtelette à l'Anglais*, the *pommes sauté*, the salad, the wine, the strawberries and cream — people have lunched better and worse, but none happier.

It was a heavenly day, and after lunch Harold proposed that they should go to the Bois or the Jardin des Plantes, or a sail on the river to St. Cloud.

"But you ought to work," said Beryl, whose eyes nevertheless sparkled at the prospect of an excursion.

"There are days when I cannot paint; this is one of them," said Harold, as they quitted the restaurant and wended their way to the Pont de l'Alma, where they embarked on a little steamer for St. Cloud.

Who has not known, at least once in a lifetime, a day when all things combined to make existence a joy and earth a paradise? — when we wake at its close as from a beautiful dream, and wonder vaguely if it is possible that to others it has only been a day in many days, while to us it has been heaven. One who has been at St. Cloud on a perfect spring day will understand how fitting a place it is for a day of such happiness. The queer little village, with its clean-swept streets, its grand old trees on either side, the picturesque peasant women in white caps, blue aprons, and wooden shoes, knitting their red stockings and chatting as they walk the

streets, the grass, the sunlight, the marble fountain, the lake, the noble ruins of Napoleon's palace, the forest and the hill commanding the finest view of Paris and the Seine — all these things combine to make it a place of rare enchantment. Beryl and Harold explored it all together, then climbed to the top of the hill and sat for a long time enjoying the splendid panorama which stretched before them — the quiet river and the great restless city beyond. Beryl sat on a moss-covered boulder, and Harold sprawled comfortably at her feet, his eyes resting on her with a soft light in their depths. The sound of hunting-horns came vaguely up from the valley, and the boats passed and repassed on the Seine below. Beryl fell into a happy reverie. She had taken off her hat, and the low sun touched her auburn hair and kissed her white throat. Harold took in the effect under his drooping eyelashes lazily, and wished himself a sun-god.

"Nothing has been lacking to my perfect happiness," he said; "the gods have been good to-day."

Beryl smiled. She was not willing to acknowledge her happiness so candidly, except to herself.

"That is because you have smoked three cigars," she said; "but I — there is something lacking to my happiness; dare you guess what it is?"

Harold consulted his watch; it pointed to four thirty.

"Tea!" he cried, triumphantly. "Behold in me your good genius. Your happiness shall be complete."

He led the way to a little tent-like structure on the brow of the hill, where an old peasant woman with an eye to business had established a small refreshment-counter, which paid very well on Sundays and fête-days. Outside under the trees of the great forest were several little tables, where Beryl and Harold were soon installed and served

with cups of refreshing tea and bread and butter — an order which had induced the old lady to shake her head disapprovingly and exclaim, "*Och! ces Anglais!*" She continued her knitting as the merry meal progressed, and smiled as she listened to their voices chattering so gaily under the new-leaved trees. "*Ah! c'est si beau — la jeunesse!*" then she sighed over her own old wrinkled hands. But all things must end, and this happy day with the rest.

Harold left the old woman happy over an extravagant *pour-boire*, and they slowly descended the hill. They stopped a moment to lean on the stone wall and watch a fête in the valley far below. The peasants were amusing themselves noisily on the switch-back railroad, and the merry-go-rounds with their squeaky organ accompaniment. The fortune-tellers, the photographers, the shooting-galleries, and all the paraphernalia which go to make up a fête in France were in full swing. It was no unusual sight, and Harold

looked on with an amused interest in their enjoyment; but Beryl became absorbed in thoughts which the scene evoked for her. The low sun reflected on the river, the sweet breath of spring, the song of the birds overhead were lost. Her eyes looked down on the quiet valley and distant fête, but what her mind saw was another—a Parisian fête. A cold, clear night, a great wondrous moon overhead, the glitter, the music, the innocent amusements. She saw the dark shadows of the dancers flit before her in that mad, merry street-dance in which all who wished might join. Then a voice had tempted her; she had caught the infection of music gone mad with frolic, and her willing feet had joined the dancers. She felt again the support of those strong arms; then the pause for breath in the black shadow of the great statue in the center of the Place Clichy, and the arms are thrown about her again, the eyes are burning into her soul, hot lips pressed to her ear are murmuring,

"Beryl! Beryl! I love you!" She trembled at the mere recollection, and the warm blood rushed into her cheeks.

They turned to go, but Harold stopped, and, taking her hand quickly in his, said in a voice full of feeling, "Tell me that this has been a happy day to you too. I — oh, Beryl — "

It was the first time he had called her so. She drew her hand away. Something in his voice had recalled that other voice that said, "Beryl, I love you!"

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CHAPTER VI

BERYL spent much of her time alone. Her life had been so different from the lives of the young girls about her that she found them far from congenial. She could not understand their untiring interest in dress and fashion. On the other hand, she knew that they did not understand her, and she had no wish that they should. Their

lives seemed so totally without purpose, and she could not remember the time when her life had not had its object. She longed for the time when she should be strong enough to go back to her beloved work at the academy, and her impatience delayed her recovery.

She spent her mornings reading and writing in her room, and her afternoons in her constitutional walk, which was generally taken alone; and she often wished for the companionship of Clay's gallant dog Czar, who had been her friend and sympathizer in all the joys and vexations of her old free life in the Rue Servandoni. Sometimes Harold took an afternoon off and joined her in these walks, when they became her chief pleasure; but of late he was absorbed in the completion of his picture for the next salon, and she only saw him in the evenings.

One dull afternoon when Beryl found her own thoughts unbearable, she threw on her wraps and started off for a stroll by the river,

for she was a firm believer in the German proverb, "Pain in the heel, peace in the heart." This river had been the dividing line between her old life and her new, and she counted the bridges as she passed them as so many links between the two. She wandered on and on, until she was surprised to find herself near to Notre Dame. The bells were ringing for vespers, and suggested that she should enter. She could rest there and perhaps find some comfort within its stony old walls. She quickly crossed the bridge and open square and entered the gloomy cathedral. At first the quiet, the dreamy chants, and the subdued light soothed her, and she began to wonder if the sisters of charity, with their peaceful faces and lowered lids under their white bonnets, like great white birds about to take wing, had ever suffered or struggled in contact with a cruel world before they sought the peace of the church. She tried to believe that they had, and that this peace was the outgrowth of

long strivings and many prayers. The thought encouraged her, and she knelt on the prie-dieu and tried to pray devoutly for that peace which passeth all understanding.

At first she felt comforted, but then, she knew not why, her thoughts wandered.

Somehow the lamps which shone with such dim religious light became transferred in her mind to the brass and colored glass lanterns of a certain little shop in the Rue de Rivoli. The priest became the funny ball-headed little Turk who presided over this shop and danced around his customers in bloomer and red slippers. Eastern rugs adorned the floor and walls, Eastern divans, stools, screens, and bric-à-brac. As in a dream she saw herself seated on a pile of silk cushions, gilt slippers with red tassels on their turned-up toes all around her, and Georges on his knees with her foot in his hand trying to fit it to a gaudy slipper. She heard, as if it were some one else, her own laugh at the absurd raillery which Georges

addressed to the little Turk in English, which the latter took for flattery, judging from Georges' smiling face.

The sweet chanting of the choir-boys in the recessional aroused her. She got up from her knees and pushed the prie-dieu from her. She felt humiliated and disgusted with self. "Even my prayers are sacrilege now," she thought, and tears of mortification filled her eyes. She tried to retrace her thoughts and discover why she had drifted so far from what she intended. The real reason was very simple. A whiff from the incense-swinger's casket had been enough to change all the current of her thoughts and recall accurately the place where she had last experienced that same odor — in the little shop of the Rue de Rivoli, where it was constantly kept burning. She had never been there since that night when she passed the brightly lighted windows with Georges and had been tempted to enter and purchase the pretty gilt slippers. She had avoided it

since, as she shunned all places which were associated with him.

Beryl left the cathedral feeling disheartened, and walked slowly homeward along the quay. She stopped to lean over the parapet and watch the sunset — almost a winter's sunset, as the sweet springlike day at St. Cloud had been followed by rain and chilly weather, which made it seem now like a beautiful dream. She was thinking of the contrast both in herself and the weather, between then and now, when she was startled by the glad barking of a dog close at hand which now bounded toward her, leaping upon her skirts and yelping, then making a circuit with scampering feet to express his exuberant canine delight. In a moment she had recognized her faithful comrade of other days, her playfellow and friend, Clay's Irish setter, Czar. Beryl was so delighted to see him that she found it difficult not to express her joy in the same mad fashion; but the little scene of a handsome woman

caressing a handsome dog had already begun to attract attention, so she twined her fingers in the brass collar of the dog and said, "Now then, Czar, take me to Clay."

The dog apparently understood perfectly, and turned off across the Pont des Arts, and Beryl's heart beat with pleasant anticipation as she quickened her pace in tune with the four impatient feet beside her.

CHAPTER VII

CLAY had been sitting alone after his day's work watching the daylight fade from the canvas on which he had been working, which he said was the best test of the truth of his values, smoking and musing, when Czar put his great paws on the door and whined to be admitted.

"Come in, you rascal! Where have you been all day?" he said, opening the door.

"May I come in too?" said a voice which made his heart give a great thud and then stand still.

"Beryl!" was all he could say as he drew her two hands to his heart and tried to read her face in the gloaming, while Czar stood by panting, and waiting for the caress he thought he deserved.

Clay was not impulsive, but in the long months of waiting since Christmas, when he had last seen Beryl, she had taken a new place in his heart. So often he had dreamed of this meeting, and waked to find it but a dream. He had even feared that she might have done something desperate when he remembered the despairing look on her face when he had last seen her, and had shuddered as he looked in the cold river as her possible refuge. And now he held her two warm living hands in his own, and pressed them to him harder than he realized, while

his honest face lighted up with a great joy.

The brisk walk with Czar had brought the blood to her cheeks, and her eyes shone for the time with their old glad radiance.

"Are you so glad to see me then, Clay?"

"Glad! Oh, Beryl!"

He led her to the chair she had always occupied at their little afternoon-tea gatherings in the past, which had been the happiest part of the day after a hard day's work at Colarrossi's. And no one made such tea as Clay! She glanced around the room. Every object was familiar to her, having been brought from the old studio in the Impasse du Maine. It was like coming home.

The twilight which flooded the room was losing itself in the mellow radiance and steady glow of the coals. The fireplace was one of the quaintest objects in the room. Clay had built it himself after one he admired at the Musée de Cluny. Gothic in architecture, it was set in dark carved oak

panels, and extended quite to the ceiling; the space above the mantel being hung with specimens of old armor, crossed swords, and bric-à-brac which Clay had amused himself collecting during the years he had passed abroad. His researches in the curiosity shops of Paris were evidenced in the amount of old tapestry, brass ornaments, swinging lamps, carved chairs, etc.

The bright fire had burned down, and the red coals heaped high at the back fell down in a glowing hillside to the low iron fender which held them in bounds at the bottom.

It recalled many a twilight hour which Beryl had passed in the old studio with Clay and Georges — sometimes listening dreamily to Georges' guitar, while his dark eyes had told her many things along with the music. And now she sat again before the fire with Clay. His delight at seeing her again had warmed her heart, and when she first burst in upon him so merrily he had thought her just as childishly happy as of old. She had

chatted about his work, about her life since they parted, and some of her new surroundings; listened with interest to his account of his travels in Spain, and enthused over his paintings done there; but her mood was changing now that the excitement of the meeting was wearing away, and she began to realize the changes in herself since she had last seen Clay, and some of the incidents of that memorable evening came back. Clay too felt the change in Beryl. There was silence. He watched her furtively while he drew long puffs from his brierwood pipe. He could not reconcile this absorbed woman sitting listlessly in the twilight, her brows gathered in lines of deep thought, with the Beryl whose laughter had been as much a part of her personality as her hair or her eyes. He saw her under lip being cruelly treated by her savage little teeth, and her eyes turned constantly toward the chair in the corner which had been known as Georges'.

At last she lifted her eyes, heavy with thought, to his face.

"Where is he, Clay?"

"I don't know."

"Is he in Paris?"

"I don't know. I have never seen him since I saw you."

Beryl gave a sigh of relief. "Then he is not in Paris. I feared he might come here. I do not wish to see him. Oh, Clay, if you knew how I hate him!"

"I know dear, I understand," said Clay, softly; "but try not to let it trouble you any more; try to forget it and be happy again."

"You must not think that I am unhappy, my friend. I have much to be grateful for, and I have been even quite happy of late. Coming here" (glancing around the room, her eyes always coming back with a sort of dreadful fascination to Georges' chair) "naturally brings back many memories." Then, with the great need she had felt to confide in some one during these months of terrible

suffering, she yielded impulsively to the temptation.

"You think me changed, Clay? Yes, I am changed," she said. "When you know what it is to have filled your life with one absorbing passion, then suddenly to stand stranded, alone, deceived in the one you have most trusted, you will know why I am changed. But suffer as I did then, suffer as I do still, I thank God for the display of cowardice which you witnessed, and which aroused me suddenly from so foolish a dream. My old nature has reasserted itself, and stands amazed before the chaos his influence had wrought. Ah, but I suffered so! I was so ill, and so alone, with so much time to think! There were times when I awoke in the darkness, dreaming that I heard his voice, when something — a devil, perhaps — whispered, 'Why not fill this miserable aching void with the old idolatry? Surely that is better than nothingness. *Go down to his level*, since he cannot rise to

yours.'" She stopped, panting. She was deadly pale now, and a shiver as of cold shook her frame. Clay's heart bled for her, but he made no effort to check her recital. The flood-gates had been opened, and the pent-up torrents needed to empty themselves before they could mingle with the calm, open sea. He gave her his unspoken sympathy, which is often the best. He crossed the room and took one of her cold little hands in his, and began chafing it gently between his honest palms. Beryl raised her deep, grateful eyes to his.

"There, Clay, you see how foolish, how almost wicked I have been."

"Poor child!" said Clay, tenderly.

"That was long ago. I have conquered all that now. I only dread to meet him because I hate him, and because I have a vague feeling that he would do me harm and undo all that peace which I have striven for and attained at last. It has been such a comfort to talk to you, dear friend. You

have helped me, as you do every one. Forgive me that I have imposed so much upon you."

"Forgive you, Beryl! No; I thank you. I implore you to test my loyalty, my sympathy, that I may prove how great is both."

She smiled at his earnestness.

"If ever I need your counsel or help, there is no one living to whom I would go so quickly as to you, Clay."

"May I give you a little counsel now?" he asked.

She nodded assent.

"You are not well. You need rest and change. I am afraid if you stay here you will be tempted to go to work again too soon. Why do you not leave Paris for a while and amuse yourself a little?"

"Leave Paris!" she repeated.

"Yes; think it over. I feel sure it would do you good. Can't you arrange to take a little tour in Italy with some one? It is just the season for it now."

"I will think about it."

It was time to go back to dinner, and, giving him her new address, she left him, feeling the reliance and support which the contact with a stronger nature than our own gives us, be our need what it may.

That night, as she stood alone in her room after an evening spent as usual in pleasant converse with Harold Bertram, she asked herself the question, "Why do I not leave Paris?" and something deep down in her heart answered, "Because I am beginning to be happy here. Because life is better, sweeter, fuller; and the man who tried once to ruin it shall not drive me away from this."

CHAPTER VIII

HAROLD'S studio in the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré was looking its best to-day, for he was expecting a visitor. Dust which had not been disturbed for many weeks was carefully brushed away, fresh spring flowers adorned the vases, and were prettily arranged before the little shrine where he had placed his picture of St. Ce-

cilia, and which showed to the best advantage in the reflex of the wax candles. The little Dutch clock on the bracket had just chimed half-past one. Harold stopped his impatient walk up and down the studio to compare it with his watch. Yes, it was really time for his guest to arrive, and she had promised to be punctual. He had carefully turned his great canvas to the wall, as by a sensitive instinct he preferred that she should ask to see his masterpiece before showing it. How much this picture meant to him! As often as Beryl had refused to pose for him he had a hope that when she saw it she might yet yield to be his sitter.

Certainly he could not ask her again, and he could not help feeling a shade of something like anger that she had refused him a thing so small to her but which might mean so much to him. He smiled to himself to think of the little diplomacy he was now using, which might end in success.

He heard a light step on the stairs; it was

she; and either from the excitement in his venture or from the agreeable pleasure of having her *chez lui*, he felt his heart quicken its beats. A ring at the bell. He drew back the curtain that covered the door, and opened it, and Beryl for the first time entered the room. Harold welcomed her cordially, and led her to a seat over which the stars and stripes drooped from the wall.

"Welcome, welcome home!" he said, laughingly, pointing to the flag.

"So you acknowledge me as a compatriot, although I am a rebel," she said.

"I am most happy."

"What a dear, cozy little place you have here!" said Beryl.

"It is only a workroom. I am going back to America so soon now that I have not taken the trouble to beautify it much; but I hope you will like it well enough to come often. Come and see how high up you are," he said.

"I quite realized that when I walked up five flights of steps," said Beryl.

"Yes, it was an imposition, for which you must be repaid by seeing my view." He helped her to mount on an old divan, and they stood side by side looking down on the crowded, noisy street, with the heavy omnibuses crowded outside and in with passengers, and the great Percheron horses struggling up and slipping back on the pavement of the long hill; the push-carts, the loaded straw wagons, covered with blue-green cloth, the hurrying cabs, the crowded sidewalks, the baker-boys with baskets of loaves on their heads, the charcoal-men with the dirty bags on their backs; the long rows of interminable weather-stained stone houses with their feet in the slush and damp and their heads in the azure and sunlight! They stood for some time watching this motley scene with interest.

"When I am tired of my work I always come to this scene for change."

"And you certainly find it," said Beryl,

coming back to the quiet of the room. "But I am all impatience; show me your picture."

He acquiesced gladly, saying, "Our history is so limited that all its great historical subjects have long since been exhausted. As the next best thing, I would illustrate the work of a great American author. I can't tell you how I admire Hawthorne, and for years this scene has seemed to me particularly happy for a great picture. When I was in Rome I visited the very church and made sketches of it with a view to this. For years I have sought a suitable model for my Donatello."

"And you have found him," said Beryl. "Do you know, your description of him has interested me so much that I don't believe that I would have come to-day but for the chance of seeing him."

"I shall be jealous of him if you say that. I thought you had come to see me and my picture."

"All three," said Beryl, settling her head comfortably in the cushions. Harold opened the "Marble Faun," saying, "Here is the scene which I wish to portray," and he read as follows: 'The monk was clad as when alive, in the brown woolen frock of the Capuchins, with the hood drawn over his head, but so as to leave the features and a portion of the head uncovered. His rosary and cross hung at his side; his hands were folded over his breast; his feet — he was of the barefooted order in his lifetime, and continued so in death — protruded from beneath the habit, stiff and stark, with a more waxen look even than his face. They were tied together at the ankles with a black ribbon.

"'The countenance, as we have already said, was fully displayed. It had a purplish hue upon it, unlike the paleness of an ordinary corpse, but as little resembling the flush of natural life. The eyelids were but partially drawn down, and showed the eyeballs

beneath; as if the deceased friar were stealing a glance at the bystanders, to watch whether they were duly impressed with the solemnity of the obsequies. The shaggy eyebrows gave sternness to the look. Miriam passed between two of the lighted candles and stood close beside the bier.

"'"My God!" murmured she, "what is this?" She grasped Donatello's hand, and at the same instant felt him give a convulsive shudder, which she knew to have been caused by a sudden and terrible throb of the heart. His hand, by an instantaneous change, had become ice within hers, which likewise grew so icy that their insensible fingers might have rattled one against the other. No wonder that their blood curdled; no wonder that their hearts leaped and paused. The dead face of the monk gazing at them between his half-closed eyelids was the same visage which had glared on their naked souls the past midnight as Donatello flung him over the precipice.' Now then,"

he said, putting his hand on the great easel which held his canvas, and turning it to face her.

The figure of the dead monk was nearly completed. Miriam was merely indicated, leaving the face a blank, for the face which he yet hoped to place there. Beryl glanced carelessly at all this, but her eyes were riveted on the figure, the pose, the face of Donatello. *It was Georges Latour!* Harold was watching her intently; he wished her opinion. And more than any one else he had wished that she should be pleased. He expected to enjoy her growing admiration of his work, feeling as he did that this was his great artistic success; but he was not in the least prepared for the manifestation of intense feeling, wonder, fear, and even horror that passed over her face. She leaned forward, her eyes dilated as one horrified yet fascinated. She forgot her surroundings, herself, everything in that spell-bound gaze.

"My God!" said Harold, "what is the matter?"

She started, and put her hand up to her head, as one half awake and half dreaming. She looked at him as though he were part of the dream and she could not account for his presence there.

"What is it?" he said. "Do you not like it — my picture?"

"Like it!" said she, "like it!" standing up and walking backward, always with the same fascinated gaze on that one figure. "Yes, I like it," she said, as though she did not know the meaning of her words. "But tell me," going to him earnestly and putting her hand on his arm, "when does he pose again, this model?"

"Why, to-day; you said you wished to see him. I am expecting him every moment."

"You mean to say he is coming here?"

"Certainly," said Harold. "I told you so. I am sorry if it disturbs you."

These words seemed to awaken her to a sense that she had betrayed herself.

"Oh, it does n't matter," she said, trying to be natural, "only I must be going," gathering up her hat and gloves. Then came the thought that she might meet him on the long stairway; as he had a rendezvous at this hour, nothing was more possible. Certainly she could not do that; it would be better to stay here. She put down her hat and gloves. A sudden thought came to her. Going over to Harold, she said excitedly, "You have often begged me to pose for Miriam; well, if you will lock the door and give me the key, I will pose for you."

Harold was too delighted at the turn affairs had taken to inquire the cause, and, fearing her mood might change again, set about preparing for the sitting joyfully.

"But the key, the key!" said Beryl, peevishly; "give me the key."

He thought she feared the entrance of some of his friends and did not like to be

caught posing, so he locked the door carefully and gave her the key, which she never let out of her hand an instant throughout that long, strange pose. And Harold painted as he never had painted before. He had gained the one thing needful to complete his masterpiece. He felt convinced that it was a freak, and that this would be the last time she would sit for him; so he strained every nerve for his perfect success. He seemed inspired. Not one line or color was placed on his canvas which at any other time he could have improved or even equaled. Certainly he lacked nothing to inspire him in such a model; if Beryl had been the veritable Miriam gazing at the dead monk of whose death she was not innocent, she could not better have displayed the expression of loathing, contempt, fear, and terrified fascination which was needed. It was not the picture of the dead monk that created these feelings in her, but that other picture of Donatello, so perfect a portraiture; and if

she shrank away, it was not from the dead, but the living. An hour passed in this way — the artist absorbed in the development of a great ideal which he saw perfecting itself under his magic touches; the model absorbed in the inward contemplation of a lost ideal of which only the ashes remained to mock her. Now and then her eyes rested on the door; she assumed the strained attitude of intense listening. She could not mistake that footfall when she heard it; so often she had listened to it on the creaking stairs in her old home in the Latin Quarter. Several times she thought she heard it; but no, it was only her strained imagination.

There could be no doubt this time; there were footsteps mounting the stairway. Beryl held her breath and pressed the great iron key cruelly in her little hand, as though by some magic it might fly away from her and open that fatal door, which locked out so much. Even in her present excited state she noted the difference between the heavy,

careworn steps along the corridor and the old buoyant, boyish tread that had made the music of her life in her happy days. The steps came nearer and nearer and nearer on the brick floor outside. She heard them opposite the door, and then a low knock. Harold raised his head from his work, giving her a smile implying that they would not notice it. For a moment there was a pause. Another feeble knock, and the steps receded, dragging themselves along the hallway in a hopeless, mechanical tread. Beryl gave a little gasp of relief, and changed color so visibly that Harold noticed it.

"You are tired," said he. "I have been cruel."

Indeed, her nerves had been taxed to the last degree, and now that the excitement was over the reaction took place, and she became of a deadly pallor and would have fallen; but Harold, frightened at what he had done, came forward quickly and helped her to dismount from the low platform where

she had been posing, and made her lie down on the divan while he went to the adjoining room to get her a glass of wine. She had obeyed him mechanically, but now that he had left the room she sat up, and in a dazed way put her hand to her head. Something had happened — what was it? Some danger — what was it? she questioned. For the moment her brain seemed reeling, and she was conscious of a great effort to collect her mental faculties, which seemed all disconnected by the terrible strain through which she had passed. She stood up and gazed around the room. Just then her eyes caught sight of the picture, fresh, beautiful, and wet from Harold's brush. She uttered a faint cry, and, pushing back her hair with both hands from her forehead, she stared at it. Little by little the thread she had lost came back to her. In the effort to keep Harold's model outside she had thought of no consequences. A momentary escape had been the one thing she thought of; now, seeing

herself so marvelously delineated on the same canvas with this man, her hand in his, a great loathing came over her that she could not restrain.

"It must not be! It shall not be!" she said. "If he sees it he will trace me, and then all is lost, the work of months — all my long struggle useless! My God! what shall I do?" She pressed her hands over her temples, which throbbed and ached. A tight cord seemed binding her brain.

"And it is like me, so like me! No, he must not see it! I have been through too much. Thus far I have succeeded in eluding him, *and I will yet.*" Seizing a great sponge that lay in front of the canvas, that Harold sometimes used to dash his brushes across in case of too much color, she dragged it across the beautiful face, leaving in its place an indistinguishable daub. She looked at the wreck she had wrought with a wild kind of glee, laughing softly to herself, and saying triumphantly to the picture of Donatel-

who held this headless woman by the hand:

"It is only thus you can hold me, my lifeless body; that is all your possession means, no more than that. Your miserable ties are broken forever. My mind and heart and life are not, and never will be, yours. Only my corpse would unresistingly suffer your touch."

She had been so absorbed in her monologue that she had utterly forgotten the present when Harold entered the room.

"Why did you get up?" he said. "You need rest. I cannot forgive myself for overtiring you so much. Take this," he added in a tone of tender solicitude, offering her a glass of wine, and leading her gently toward the couch.

He had been no little frightened at her seemingly prostrated condition, and for the moment even his great work, which he was fully conscious of having accomplished this day, was forgotten in his anxiety for her.

She, on the contrary, realized for the first time what a terrible ruin she had wrought for him. She well knew how his heart was set on this picture, and even in her dazed condition had fully realized that he had excelled himself to-day in this painting of herself, and that it meant name and fame for him. She was frightened for the effect the discovery of what she had done would have on him, and she was sunk into the bitterest chagrin.

He held the wine to her lips, thinking that she was unable to take it herself; but in that instant all he had been to her, all the sweetness, beauty, and depth of her love for him came sweeping over her, and with it the terrible certainty that he would hate her — that she had lost him through her own act, the act of an instant. She pushed the wine away, longing to fall at his feet and cry for forgiveness; to tell him of this great love that was clamoring in her heart to be heard; to explain her wretched act in her great

need of his love. His eyes, following hers, rested on the disfigured canvas where he had worked so breathlessly. He started back, changed color, and his eyes met hers fiercely, questioningly.

All her love, all that she was suffering, was portrayed in her voice as she cried:

"Oh, try, try not to hate me!"

CHAPTER IX

THE events recorded in our last chapter wrought a great change in the lives of two guests of Madame Sanderson.

Harold Bertram had been wounded in his deepest interests, and he felt the blow all the more keenly because it had been dealt by a beloved hand. He could not and would not meet Beryl at present, and to further

this end he spent his evenings with friends long neglected. He rarely went to his studio, as the great canvas, now turned to the wall, mocked him, as it recalled all too vividly the incidents of that last sitting. He felt more lonely, bored, and troubled than he cared to confess, even to himself. Beryl, in the mean time, was suffering physically as well as mentally, and kept her room the greater part of the time. Through the congenial companionship of her new-found friend Beryl had all but forgotten her sad experience in Bohemia. Life had once more become beautiful; then in the midst of her happiness that same past which she imagined asleep had stirred and thrust itself between her and the man whom she trusted and honored, and caused him to look upon her with distrust. Poor, foolish child! If she had confided in him, all would have been well; but in the dread of offending him she angered him, for how could he know that her stubborn refusal to tell him all was but

a mute testimony of her love for him? And yet, could he have read the one short chapter of her life, he would have pitied and condoned the pure, trustful nature which believed all men to be noble and true.

But Beryl did not know this, and they had parted in silence and anger. And now, once more, she was alone in Paris. She had known this desolation before, but then she had been the wronged; now she felt herself the guilty one, and she longed inexpressibly to right the wrong — but how? There was no depth to which she would not subject herself to regain what she had lost; but he had told her her only course lay in an explanation which she believed would only be fatal.

The estrangement of these two had not passed unremarked in the house. Their growing interest in each other had been of interest to all, and now their estrangement became a subject for debate and curious speculation. It was remarked that Harold's

chair at the table d'hôte was always empty, while Beryl's pale face was rarely seen in their midst. The tenderest approaches on the part of kind old Mr. Murphy elicited nothing more than the fact that she felt ill.

One dark afternoon she sat before her window, writing-tablet and pen in hand. She had made a grim resolve, and yet when she drearily traced "My dear sister," and saw the first paragraph of her resolution appear in inky blotches, her heart failed her. No, she could not go back to America, to that vapid, colorless existence she had left. Paris, with all its heartaches, was infinitely more bearable. No; she would go away from this house and live it down. Some day Harold would learn her story, and then — perhaps —

A long, low sigh escaped her lips as she rose, tearing the letter into fragments.

This gloomy little chamber was becoming more like a cell than a room, looking out as it did on a gloomy courtyard. Hoping to

find the salon deserted, as was usually the case in the late afternoon, she silently descended and peered in at the door. The dusky light of a late April afternoon filtered through the crumpled lace curtains, and, mingling with the dim firelight, gave the place an air of mystery. She closed the door softly, and, taking a paper to the window, tried to read by the uncertain light, but soon gave it up, and gazed out into the dreary gloaming; and her heart, her soul, her whole being yearned for the reconciliation which alone could comfort. The world outside darkened, and she became a part of the shadow of the window drapery. The silence of the great room became oppressive, and she was meditating where next she might go to escape from herself, when the door-knob rasped in its socket, there was a quick, firm step upon the oak floor, and she needed not to turn her head to know who had entered. Had she not detected that step as he passed her door each night within the dreary time

since she had last spoken to him, as she lay awake listening for him to come home?

He crossed the room and stood in gloomy contemplation by the table. The coals sent a ruddy glow over his face and figure, and exaggerated the care-worn lines in his face, which she had never seen before.

Presently, with a quick movement he brushed his hand before his eyes — the action suggested to Beryl the dashing aside of some hated thought — then, turning to the table, he seized a paper and tried to read; but there was a look in his eyes which told Beryl that he saw neither paper nor text. Then there crossed his face a look of unutterable sadness, and with a sigh which shook his frame he threw his arm forward on the table and dropped his head upon it. But suddenly he started to an upright position and then to his feet, as the silence of the room was broken by a sob coming from the direction of the window, and against its faint light he beheld the form of the woman he

loved. His first impulse was to cast all resentment aside and once more take up that beautiful intercourse which during the past days of unrest had grown trebly dear in contrast. That pitiful sob had gone straight to his heart. But even at this moment, although he had forgiven the destruction of his chef-d'-œuvre, he could not forget the mystery in which she had shrouded the cause.

He was jealous, honestly jealous, of an existence in which he had had no part, and which for some reason she feared to reveal; and as she approached with tender, pleading gesture, he steeled himself to concede nothing.

"Forgive me, oh, forgive me! You must! You shall!" she pleaded. "Ah, if you knew *all*, you *would!* I was selfish, I own. I was thinking only of self when I did that mad act. I never meant to wrong you — how could you think it? Believe me, trust me, won't you? Can't you?" she sobs.

Here an unlooked-for interruption occurred that rendered further pleading on her part unnecessary, for, although unconscious of the fact, she had at hand a powerful advocate.

From the great arm-chair near the fireplace a figure arose — the bent figure of an old man with silver hair, whose presence had not been noticed by either of them, as he was concealed behind the capacious back of the chair.. He came forward totteringly, and took a hand of each in his. "I owe you an apology, my young friends," said old Mr. Murphy. "I could not help hearing your conversation, as I am not deaf, but now I feel that I have a part to perform in it. I do not know what you have done, my dear," turning to Beryl, "or why Mr. Bertram is angry, but I want to see you forgiven just the same. I have felt the earnestness of your pleading, and so has my friend Harold. He cannot deny it — do you mean to tell me that you can doubt this

pure, sweet, woman?" putting his hand on her head and turning her face up toward him. Harold's eyes follow the old man's gaze.

"No," he said, "I cannot."

CHAPTER X

AND so the happy evenings, which she had thought were lost forever, came back to Beryl; and dear old Mr. Murphy smiled benignly as he watched the light come back to her eyes in the new joy of reconciliation. Their intercourse had been taken up frankly where it had left off, with an added tenderness and new appreciation of each other

which was as sweet as it was dangerous. But Beryl never allowed herself to think of this happiness as lasting. Since she knew that Georges was in Paris she knew that he would seek her and sooner or later put an end to everything. It was but a question of time, she thought, and to defer the evil day as long as possible she made a hermit of herself; and Harold's persuasions for walks or excursions proved fruitless, until her excuses of fatigue or headache became real, for she needed fresh air and exercise so much that her color began to fade and her eyes to grow pathetically large, with their great dark circles. She did not doubt the wisdom of Clay's advice now, and she intended to go away; but she was a coward when she thought of leaving her friend, and she postponed her decision from day to day. She felt like a condemned criminal who does not know the day of his reckoning, and the hours were all the more precious because they might be the last.

These thoughts were in her mind one evening as she met Harold at the foot of the steps on the way to her room after dinner. It had grown a habit for him to wait for her there, and she smiled her welcome. She thought there was more than usual tenderness in his dark gray eyes to-night as he took her hand in his, and she had no power to keep back the warm, happy blush that overspread her face.

"Remember, I am waiting for you in the salon, and don't stay up there long," he said as he released her hand. "I want to talk to you."

Beryl looked over her shoulder as she mounted the stairs, and laughed, for it had become a joke now that he always "wanted to talk to her," and she promised to be down immediately.

She was surprised to find the man-servant knocking at her door as she turned into the upper hall.

"What is it, François? I am here," she called out, gaily.

The man advanced and handed her a note.

"Messenger-boy brought it," he said. "There is no answer."

Beryl took it mechanically, but no sooner had her eyes rested on the address than she started visibly, and turned pale. It was Georges' handwriting. She crushed the note in her hand, and vaguely turned the knob, entered, and shut herself in.

"It has come, then," she said, with pale, trembling lips, as she felt nervously for the matches, and burnt her fingers in her haste to light the candles. She was trembling so she caught at the furniture as she moved about the room, and, placing the light near her, she sat down at the table and tore off the envelope from the sheet of paper. It was short, and her feverish eyes devoured its contents, while she almost held her breath with excitement.

My love has at last been able to discover you. For several days I have watched for you, but you do not come. I fear you are ill, so if you do not meet me to-night on the Pont de l'Alma at nine o'clock, I shall come to you.

G. L.

"Come here! No, he *shall* not!" She had grown calm now that there was need for action, and her resolution was taken at once. She would prevent his coming to her at any cost. She would meet him. It would not be the first time, she said, bitterly. "Please God it might be the last." She did not know then how that last sentence was doomed to ring its mocking voice in her ears in the near future. First she must write to Harold. She did so, forming many different excuses, and then tearing up the sheet as she decided that it would not be plausible. She at last wrote that she had a message from a friend who needed her, and she must go at once. She knew it was a miserable, lame excuse, but there was no time to do otherwise now. She took off her

pretty dinner-dress and put on a dark serge which would not be conspicuous, and covered herself with a rain cloak, drawing the hood over her head.

She looked at her watch; it was half-past eight. It occurred to her that Harold was perhaps at that very moment looking at his watch in the drawing-room and thinking she was late. There was no time to lose; she must be off at once, or she might encounter him looking for her. She unlocked her cabinet and took from it the hated ring, slipped it into her pocket, and ran down the stairs. On the second landing she had heard a familiar air and recognized Harold's touch on the piano. Thank Heaven! she was safe not to meet him, for she felt herself too weak to look into his eyes and recite the little story she had written for him. On the *rez de chaussée* she dropped her note on the table in the concierge's bureau, which was deserted, as the old man was at dinner in the back room, and let herself out into the

street, pulling the great door behind her with a heavy bang. She felt herself shut out from every one, and thrown on the world again to fight the battle—to win or to lose, which? It was too early to go to her rendezvous, and so she wandered on, with the object for the present of getting away from Harold; and she hated herself for the complications which made this necessary. Once she had been so fearless and used to finding her way alone; but of late she had been so protected and shielded, so cared for by her dear compatriot, that she felt strange and almost frightened all alone in the street. It was damp and windy; the clouds hurried across the sickly moon in a confused way that excited her, and made her feel that she must hurry on, on, on, no matter where, no matter how. Her thoughts seemed to chase one another across her brain somewhat as the clouds were doing across the moon's disk. They became very confused, mingled with the sense of deceiving Harold, and her re-

sentment toward the cause of all her troubles, whom she was hurrying to meet. One thought predominated: she would defy this man who had made himself the curse of her young life, then she would see Harold once more, tell him all, and leave him forever. Her head was burning hot, and she had a feeling she could go on this way forever without being tired; her feet seemed not to touch the ground, so queer and unreal she felt. She drank in great, deep breaths of the wind that blew from the river, and pushed back her hood to cool her heated head for a moment. She knew she had need of all her faculties, and yet she realized she did not think as clearly as she ought. Her heart was devoured with a mighty hatred for the man she was going to meet; all his cowardice and wickedness came back to her with renewed force, as it had done always when she had thought about it in the long, sleepless nights, or when she had wakened from some horrible dream in which Georges

had always played the part of her evil genius.

Passing a great illuminated clock, she noticed that it was nine o'clock, and hurried to the Pont de l'Alma, feeling that the sooner this hated interview was over the better. The bridge proved to be very deserted, and she noticed almost at once the dark figure, every outline of whose physique she had known so well, pacing slowly, with long, panther-like tread, near the center of the bridge. Just at the moment when she approached him he was walking with his back to her. As he turned his haggard face and saw her he gave a cry of subdued delight and sprang toward her. Beryl gave no sign of recognition as she ignored the hands stretched out eagerly to hers, but let her eyes, whose gaze had cowered him when they last parted, meet his.

"I have come," she said, coldly. "Now what do you want?"

"*Beryl!*" he said, a world of reproach

and feeling in his rich tones, which he knew so well how to modulate to every shade of expression that suited his cause, be it devilish or divine. "Is this the greeting you give me after all these weary months of waiting and longing and anxious searching?"

"Why did you seek me?" she broke in, angrily. "The one thing I have earnestly desired since the day I last saw you has been that I might never see you again. By what right do you seek me?"

"The right that I love you, I adore you."

"Don't dare to speak to me of your love!" she said, her eyes flashing angrily, and her voice trembling with passion. "It is an insult to all love that you dare to name it. Love is brave, true; yours was the embodiment of cowardice, that could desert its object at the moment it was most needed to be loyal, and by a dastardly silence allow her to be insulted in your very presence."

He had let her go on, never dreaming but that when her passion had spent its force he

could exercise the same influence over her to which she had once yielded so blindly; but as she went on he began to realize that she was changed, that there was something in the indignant woman who stood before him that was different from the girl he had trifled with so lightly, without a pang of conscience or a twinge of remorse as to its ending.

There are men who are doubly attracted when repulsed by a woman. Georges Latour was one of them. He had held Beryl's love lightly enough in the days when he felt sure of its possession, but during the months that he had sought her, and, above all, now when he had found her, only to be repulsed by her, he was fully aroused to all he had lost. "If she does not love me it is because she loves some one else," he argued, and the thought maddened him.

"Beryl," he said, desperately, "you cannot have forgotten all that we were to each other, all the vows — promises —"

"Vows broken by you," she interrupted.

"Promises which were a mockery, since they meant nothing to you; but I have lived to thank God for their frailty. But — listen to me, Georges — I did not come here to barter words with you, and nothing that you can do or say can move me with anything but contempt for you. There is nothing so dead as a dead love. I am come to tell you this simply that all may be finally understood between us, and to give you this." She took the ring from her pocket and held it toward him. "Take it," she said; "it has been the emblem of a troth broken by you and despised by me. Take it!"

For all answer he looked at her darkly, with incredulous bloodshot eyes. Was he dreaming, or was she mad?

She waited, and the innocent gold thing burned her palm; then she threw it from her with all her force. It struck against the stone pier, then caught the light from the lamp in its rebound, and fell with a faint sound into the water.

Nothing could have astonished Georges more, and this act of open rebellion enraged him. He caught her wrists in his hands.

"By God!" he said through his teeth, "would you have me hurl you after it? Do you know whom you are defying? Do you know that if I like I have it in my power to compromise you with your fine friends? Listen to me, Beryl: you have said that you do not love me, and I am compelled to believe you; but I am not a fool, and I know that if you do not love me it is because you love some one else. What will he think when I tell him about this little adventure, and many others I could mention? I need not recall them to you."

Beryl winced at his words and tried to draw her hands away from his cruel clasp. She knew he was capable of making good his words and to construct a story with grains of truth strong enough to compromise her seriously. Georges was quick to see

that he had struck the right chord, and followed up his advantage.

"One word, Beryl, and I will not do this; so well I love you that your scorn and hatred cannot alter my love. You know how happy we were once; you cannot have forgotten that. Forget all that lies between us, and let us be to each other what we once were. It was not all on my side. You know how you loved me then. How you put your dear arms about me, and —"

"Hush!" She had borne it with a horrible effort thus far, clutching her nails into her tender palms, but she could stand it no longer. The fact that what he said was true hurt her more and more, until each word seemed another thrust of some sharp instrument into her heart, her brain. She hated herself so, that it was true; she hated him so, that he dared to recall it.

"Listen to me once and forever," she said. "That is so utterly dead that I would rather now throw myself into that friendly

river, and face an uncertain eternity than a certain time with you."

"Then, by the gods, you have had your last chance!" he cried in rage, throwing her hands from him. "I will see to it that the man you love does not remain ignorant of certain little matters that may interest him. Miss Carrington's career before she appeared on his horizon. Her sudden departure after a certain accusation may need explanation."

All this had been sneered into her face with something of a devil's delight in planning an angel's fall.

"And add that *you*, knowing better than any one else that this accusation was false, stood by like a dastardly coward and allowed your fiancée to be insulted by your mistress. I but ask that when you tell your story, you remember the truth."

She slipped away from him as she finished these words, and he made no effort to stop her. Only when she was out of hearing he

sank down on the spot where she had stood, with the despairing cry, "Lost!"

Beryl went on mechanically. She felt very tired; her brain began to whirl, and her temples throbbed so she could not think. She only knew that all she had struggled for had in some mysterious way been lost, and she was so numb and tired that she could not understand or care much. Once or twice she tried to rouse herself, and think and feel something, but she was beyond it all; she had suffered her limit, and all grew more and more confused, till she gave it up. She reached the house and was silently let in by the concierge, and, gaining her room mechanically, went to bed more from force of habit than anything else.

Beryl tossed all night in a feverish state which was neither sleeping nor waking, but was utter unrest. It was broad day before she slept. She dreamed that she was alone in a little boat with Georges on a stormy

sea. It was night, and the angry waves all but enveloped her, while all the time they were bearing her farther and farther from a light spot on land where Harold held out his arms to her. Then she was alone in prison, and the face of a horrible old hag, which looked strangely like Madame Dubray, grinned at her from the grated window. And on and on through fancies and horrors, until she did not know whether they were dreams or delirium when she awoke late in the afternoon, with her head aching strangely and a burning thirst in her throat.

CHAPTER XI

IT was growing dark, and Clay began to place things aside preparatory to leaving his studio for the night. He had not been there all day, and for the last hour had been sitting alone brooding over the sad news that had come to him that morning. He had dropped into the Art Students' Club to see some new black-and-white sketches that

were attracting attention, and had almost immediately perceived that something of an unusual nature was being discussed by the groups of men who were gathered in different parts of the room. The suppressed tones and awed faces told him that the subject of their talk was something terrible; but it could not concern him, so he passed on to the sketches.

"Ah! Sargent, you are quite a stranger here. I am glad to see you," and Clay recognized a co-laborer of his Colarrossi Academy days. "I suppose you have heard the gruesome news. No? I thought that had brought you here. You were old friends, I believe."

Then the terrible story was told of how a man had come in late the night before, taken a room, and been found this morning lying in a pool of blood with a bullet through his head and a pistol lying near. The man was Georges Latour. A clear case of suicide; one of the many that Paris furnishes

every year. But why stop to describe it? No one had heard the shot, which might be accounted for in that the house sets back in a garden; the concierge's lodge is near the gate. and he is also slightly deaf.

Clay was indescribably shocked by the news. He had never seen Georges since that Christmas night when he had rushed from the house in pursuit of Beryl. He wondered if that scene had any part in this sequence. Clay was a man to first see his duty and then do it. He found that he was the only one of Georges' friends who had known him before he came to Paris. so he asked leave to take charge of the body and attend to the burial. The coroner had already been summoned, the case pronounced suicide, and the right of burial was given over to Clay, who was also put in possession of the few things found upon the deceased's person. He found enough money to defray the funeral expenses, and placed the letters, papers, etc., in his own pocket,

to be examined at his leisure. There was a great deal to be done, and he did not find time to look at these until late in the afternoon, when he entered his studio for the purpose. There were a few unreceipted bills, and only one letter. It was from Gabrielle Dubray. He read the amorous missive, then put it away with disgust; decided to pay the bills with the money and pay the funeral expenses himself. Then he gave himself up to a long reverie over the ill-spent life that had closed so tragically, and a vain regret that it had not been prevented in time. But it was growing dark, and the studio at that hour was a gloomy place for such somber thoughts; so he arranged the window for the night, turned his unfinished picture to the wall, and stopped to turn toward him for a moment the canvas on which Beryl's bright face, with the curling hair, smiling lips, and sparkling eyes, laughed into his. He had never fully realized what a success he had made of it

until then. Its brightness flashed like sunlight into this dreary room and the dark, gloomy thoughts that had been oppressing him. She must never know how Georges met his death, or she may blame herself, he thought.

Then came a low tap at the door, which, as he stood uncertain, was repeated nervously. He strode over to the door with his candle, wondering at so late a visitor, and opened it to find himself confronted by Beryl, whose white, scared face was as different as possible from the picture he had been regarding. She wore a long black cape, from which the hood had fallen back. Her hair was disheveled, her lips ashen, and she made a great effort to control their nervous twitching. Czar gave a glad bark and came forward wagging his tail, expecting to be caressed, but she took no notice of him.

"Thank God, you are here!" she said, pushing past him into the room, and forming a weird picture, while her great shadow

loomed up on the dark wall from Clay's candle. "Thank God, you are here! I believe if you had not been here I should have gone mad. I feel so near to it. Don't let me, Clay. Tell me it is not true, and save my reason."

All this time she had wrung her hands nervously over a piece of crumpled paper, which she seemed to be afraid to hold and yet as afraid to let go. She pushed her hair away from her forehead, as though there was something too heavy for her poor brain, that must give way under its load.

"Tell me it is not true! I cannot bear it!"

Clay was fully aroused for her safety. Any one who saw her thus for the first time would have said she was already mad.

"Dear Beryl, do try to calm yourself." He did not wish to ask for an explanation, because he did not wish to explain himself. He tried to put her off and gain time in which to think, and know how to act best for her.

"Sit down; you are so tired, and wet too," touching her damp cloak gently. "Why have you come, Beryl, at this hour of the night? I might have come to you to-morrow." He was trying to put an every-day, natural aspect on this unnatural state of affairs, and so he tried to turn her thoughts into ordinary channels. She did not sit down, but stood staring at him as if dazed; then suddenly, with a quick glance at the paper which she still held in her trembling hands:

"How can you, Clay, how dare you speak of other things till you have answered me this! Say it is not true — that is all I ask. Tell me it is all some horrible dream, and I will bless you, and I will — yes, I will try not to hate him. I seemed to see his dead face everywhere." She stood staring around the half-lighted studio. "But I said, 'If I can only see Clay, he will tell me.' And you will?" She came close to him and put her two hands on his shoulders, staring into his

eyes with an intensity that seemed to compel the truth. Then, starting back from him, she clasped her hands, and, raising them overhead in an old gesture he well remembered, she laughed, if it may be called laughter, which had more of terror, suffering, and despair in it than all her wild words.

Through all this strange scene Clay had not ceased to ask himself what it would be best to do. Now fully aroused for her safety, he resolved to save her reason at any cost; and hesitating no longer, he quickly unlocked his small cabinet, where several vials stood in disorderly array, and rapidly selecting one, he poured a few drops into a glass with a little water and handed it to her. He knew she was in no mood to be deceived or coaxed from her purpose, and so he said simply:

"Drink this, Beryl, and I will tell you all."

She had been used to Clay's commanding ways, and never hesitated to do as he bid;

so, taking the glass from him with simple obedience, she drained its contents.

"That is a good girl," said Clay; "now sit here and rest until I light the lamp." He had purposely pushed her toward the old divan as he spoke. Clay went about the room with pretended haste, but really allowing every little thing to detain him. First he could not find the matches; then the lamp was in the wrong place, and he must search for it; until Beryl cried out peevishly:

"Oh, Clay, I don't want the light! Come and talk to me."

But he made some excuse, and her voice was beginning to grow fainter and more tired, and she began to succumb to a great drowsiness. She tried to rouse herself, but Clay noticed with pleasure that her lids began to droop beyond her power of control, and the little ruddy brown head had sunk among the pillows. He stopped his aimless search, and took up his watch by the couch. She

moved feebly in her effort to keep awake, and said, "Clay, Clay!" in a voice a great way off and ever growing fainter, each time with the same reply, "Yes, dear, I am here close by you," and with an earnest "Thank God, she sleeps! She is saved."

CHAPTER XII

SHE is saved!

This thought so occupied Clay at first that he thought of nothing else. He had acted greatly on impulse, it is true, but he had done what he earnestly believed to be the best thing possible under the circumstances for her, and he was glad to feel that she had not a second time appealed to him

for help in vain. She was sleeping heavily now, and the little hands that had so nervously held the crumpled letter had relaxed their hold, and it only lay lightly between the pink palms. Clay leaned over and released it. He knew she had meant him to read it, and it would be best to know all, that he might be better prepared to act for her interests. He smoothed out the wrinkled sheet, and, holding it close to the candle, read it through. It was just as he had feared. Georges had attributed the cause of his death to his love for Beryl. He must have written and posted the letter just before he committed the fatal act. It was written in French, which better suited the impassioned nature of its sentences than English. It was an admirable bit of composition, and he could understand how its effect might influence a nature like Beryl's. A feeling of unutterable sadness came over Clay as he laid aside this letter. The scene around him, the sleeping woman, who had held this

message from the dead in her hand, and the strange chain of events that had brought her there, were enough to affect him, but the remembrance of how he had seen that morning the dead body of the writer added a double sadness to the situation. For the moment a great pity for the man overpowered him, but a moment's thought recalled that other letter from Gabrielle Dubray found in the dead man's pocket, bearing the same date as this, which revealed so much hidden treachery that he experienced a reaction. Poor Georges! his weakness had been his ruin. Neither his passion nor his love had satisfied him. Stable in nothing, he had fluctuated between the two until death had been his only refuge. What a commentary on the dead man were these two letters!

Realizing that the effect which this last had produced on him would be the most healthful that Beryl could experience, he resolved to show it to her when she awoke,

and thus intercept any sentimental pity on the girl's part which Georges' last letter to her might have produced.

Clay took out his watch. It was ten o'clock. Then for the first time he thought of something else than the absorbing tragedy. The old matter-of-fact question confronted him, What would the world think? Beryl had of course intended returning, and had evidently left no word to the effect that she should remain out all night. What devilish suspicions might not be engendered by this simple fact unexplained? And the more he thought of it the more he wondered at his own indiscretion, and determined that she must be taken home. He looked at the sleeper; she breathed heavily, and was in a deep, dull sleep, from which it would be apparently impossible to arouse her.

"I will wait till twelve o'clock," he concluded, "and by that time she will have slept off the effects, and I can take her home." With this he walked to the window

and looked out upon the dreary courtyard, which, with the help of the moonlight and his own excited thoughts, looked weird and unnatural.

He paced the floor with no fear now of awakening her, restlessly at intervals taking out his watch to mark the hour, and stopping beside the low couch to see if she slept less heavily, or to place his fingers on her pulse, to note that its beating was regular. Clay was a man and an artist, and he could not but remark the beauty of the picture she made. All the care had gone out of her sweet face; those terror-stricken eyes were closed now; they only gave the impression of rest. An arm was carelessly thrown over her head, from which her sleeve fell loosely, displaying the rounded beauty of a well-turned wrist. All of the artist in him was aroused, all the man in him loved, and he experienced beneath the anxiety of the situation an exquisite delight in having her near him, and remembering that the last words

her lips had uttered had been to call his name. But her honor was at stake, and his was no selfish love, to trifle with even the appearance of evil where she was concerned. He leaned over her, and with the firm, distinct voice which persons employ on such occasions, he called her by name several times. Not a quiver of her eyelids, not a change of muscle betokened that she heard him. The same deep happy sleep, the same deep-drawn respirations, and the same smile of peace. He knelt by the couch, and, taking her hand in his, rubbed it, first gently and then roughly, but with no effect, and letting it go, it dropped as though she had been dead.

He shook her shoulder — no result. This was becoming serious. Was it possible that he had given her too much of the sleeping-draught? He had seen a medical student administer the same quantity with no effect, but he forgot that Beryl had probably in all her life never taken one drop of

a narcotic. In the mean time the hours went by. He settled himself in his arm-chair, and, man-like, sought a man's consolation in his pipe. She was unable to think for herself, so he employed the time in thinking for her. Between the puffs he decided that, all things considered, it was best that she should leave Paris at once. There was too much here to remind her of the past and the unhappiness of the present. Care had told on her face, too, and had impaired her health. A change was necessary for mind and body; but when, and how? Should he send her away to the country, where she could have pure air and relaxation of body and mind — to Fontainebleau, or Versailles, or to St. Germain? She could decide for herself where she preferred to go in the morning. It was two o'clock now, and he began to experience that natural weariness which comes to us all, no matter how great the mental pressure may be, or how deeply our own thoughts may in-

volve us. He crouches low in the great arm-chair, and is soon as sound asleep as Beryl. Czar leaves his place on the rug lazily, and stretches himself at his master's feet.

CHAPTER XIII

IF moonlight and starry effects have done much to illusionize mortals, the gray dawn has counteracted its influence by thrusting on us its stern and inexorable reality. Never is truth more bare and more hideous than when it comes to us in the dawn of our first waking thoughts. Be our dreams what they may, we never see facts

in quite so unvarnished a light as when they confront us with our first waking sensibilities.

Perhaps this is still more the case when our sleep has been dreamless and artificially induced, as Beryl's had been.

It was about five o'clock in the hazy gray morning when she first opened her eyes. Her first feeling was that of astonishment at her surroundings. The great curtainless window overhead rendered the place lighter at this hour than an ordinary room would have been. The model stand, the gray background where Clay posed his figures, the plaster casts, the stacks of dusty canvases, the movable easel bearing his unfinished work, the low seats under the spreading Japanese umbrella which shut in a cosy corner, all of which were familiar objects, now took on unnatural and weird aspects in the half gray light of this April morning.

The room was cold with the penetrating cold of dawn. At first she did not notice Clay, who had slept just as she last saw him,

without removing his greatcoat, which he had put on before she entered the previous evening. She found herself warmly covered in his plaid and fur rug.

"Poor boy! he must be cold." She threw one of her rugs over him, and was glad that he slept, for many reasons. She wished to think. Little by little all the incidents of the day before came back to her; she remembered all clearly up to a certain point. But why had she slept there all night? She certainly had not intended to do so, and even her unconventional head saw that this was a most unconventional proceeding. She went over it all again, tracing it up to the time that Clay was lighting the lamp. But why had she slept there? Then she remembered that he had given her something to drink. She remembered that she had been suffering horribly with her head. It felt so cool and rested now, she could only bless him for acting so wisely. Her thoughts were cut short. Clay stirred, and raised himself in his

chair. He looked frightened, as a faithful nurse might, who had so far forgotten his patient as to sleep himself.

"Ah, you are awake, and much better, I hope. I have been a lazy fellow, but you shall have some breakfast now."

Beryl smiled. This matter-of-fact way of taking the situation and busying himself with another's comfort was so like this dear, good Clay. So many memories of his goodness crowded her mind as she watched him moving about the room, building the fire, and arranging this or that for her comfort. If any one must be cold or tired or overworked in the old student life, it was always Clay that chose that part. The same little alcohol-lamp that had boiled the water for so many afternoon teas was now simmering musically for the breakfast coffee.

"Clay," said Beryl, and his heart misgave him, as he thought he detected a tone of reproach in her voice; and before she could go on he said:

"I feared you would be angry, Beryl, but God knows I did it for the best; and it was best," he added.

"What was best — that you should wrap me in all that was warm and cozy on a comfortable couch, and you to sleep in a chair with no robe to cover you?"

"Ah, is that what you mean? I feared it was something more serious. I feared that you were angry with me for giving you the draught. But you must know, Beryl, that I little thought it would make you sleep all night; and I tried again and again to awaken you to take you home. When I gave you the mixture I was seriously alarmed for your reason, and — but surely, Beryl, I need not say all this."

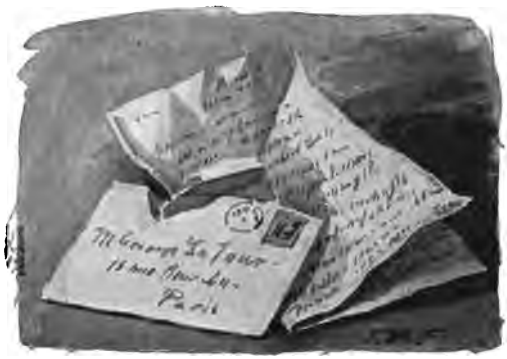
"Certainly not; you did right. We will say no more about it, please."

Then Clay told her very gently all the sad incidents of the day before. He told her that he had read the cruel letter which had brought her to him in despair; and as he left

the studio to buy their breakfast, he gave her the other letter to read — the one which he had taken from the dead man's pocket — trusting that it would do away with any remorse on account of Georges' death. He hated to contaminate her pure hands with so vile a thing, but he knew it would be a cure — if an heroic one.

"Don't let the kettle boil over. Czar will take care of you, won't you, old fellow?"

The dog got up as if to prove his capability, and put his head on Beryl's knees. And so Clay left them.



CHAPTER XIV

BERYL listened to Clay's retreating steps as he descended the short stairs and crossed the court, then took up the letter he had left with her. It was blurred, and the writing was indistinct in many places, but she recognized at once the handwriting of her old enemy, Madame Dubray. As she read, the expression of her face rapidly

changed from surprise to intense disgust. It was the passionate reply to a letter evidently of the same nature accepting a rendezvous for the very night that she had met Georges on the bridge; and so he had, after all his protestations, gone from the one to the other, with the weak vacillation which had characterized all his actions. Clay was right. She need no longer blame herself. He had designed a lifelong remorse for her, but kind Providence had undone his work by bringing this proof of a new perfidy under her eyes; and the terrible fear lest she had been the cause of his death haunted her no longer. She was about to consign the letter to the flames, when there came a hurried tap at the door. Czar started to his feet with a low growl, but Beryl patted his head, and, thinking that Clay was probably encumbered with bundles and unable to open the door for himself, she crossed the room with the dog at her heels and threw it wide open, to be confronted, not by Clay — but by Gabri-

elle Dubray. The two women stood looking at each other, speechless.

"You wished to see Monsieur Sargent, I suppose?" said Beryl. "He has gone out."

She spoke as calmly as she could, hoping that Madame Dubray on hearing this would go away. On the contrary, she closed the door behind her and came forward.

"I wished to see Monsieur Sargent, certainly; but as he is out I will wait for him."

She looked long and steadily at Beryl, the same malignant hatred in her gaze that had been there in other days.

"Do you know that Georges Latour is dead?" she said at last, with painful distinctness, watching the effect of her words.

"Yes," said Beryl, simply.

"Do you know that he took his own life?"

"Yes."

"And do you know that you are as good

as his murderess — that he killed himself for you?"

"No, I do not. I deny all responsibility for his death."

Madame Dubray had by an almost superhuman effort controlled herself thus far, but now she poured forth all her pent-up wrath in a torrent of abuse.

"And he loved you! He believed in your hypocritical virtue. Oh, if he were not dead, that he might know where I find you to-day! Before his poor body is put away — here with another — his friend, too. This, then, is why you left him. Oh, if he might have known it! If he might have known you as I do, he might have better appreciated the pure love that I gave him."

A look of withering scorn mingled with unutterable loathing was the girl's only reply; then, as if to crush this vile being, she thrust the letter she had just finished reading into the woman's face.

"As for your pure love," she utters, contemptuously, "perhaps you would like to guard a souvenir of its purity."

Gabrielle Dubray started forward as she recognized her own handwriting, and snatched it fiercely from the girl's hand. A wild cry escaped her lips as she made a frenzied movement toward Beryl, only to recoil in abject terror. In her very face, close upon her throat, were the gleaming eyes and fangs of old Czar. Beryl clung to her noble defender's collar, using all her powers to divert another tragedy, but her strength was fast waning. Gabrielle Dubray had reached the door, when it flew back, and Clay stood in the opening. He apparently took in the whole situation at a glance. With a few words he quieted the excited dog. Then, turning to the frightened woman, he asked, fiercely:

"And pray, what brings *you* here?"

Humiliated by her recent encounter, and fearing the wrath of this man, she quickly

bethought herself of the errand that brought her to his door.

She fumbled in her pocket for a paper, which she held toward him.

"Sign that, I beg of you, that I may bury him. They told me you could give me the privilege if you would. I ask nothing more."

It was an official document which permitted the bearer to take charge of the body of Georges Latour for burial. She stood dumb while he went to his desk and signed the paper, then she took it, and quickly left the room.

CHAPTER XV

WHEN Beryl struggled between her conviction that she ought to leave Harold and her desire to stay near him, she had no thought that the question would decide itself as it did; and it was only after Clay had established her at St. Germain, and she had sent Harold her unsatisfactory note of farewell, that she realized how completely she had shut herself out of his life.

In the mean time Harold surmised that Beryl had remained with the friend "who had sent for her"; and after he had wondered at her leaving so suddenly, and become jealous of the *friend*, whom he pictured as some "old-maid artist," he began to feel lonely, deserted, and ill-treated. It was all very well for her to write that her change of plans only made their final parting a week earlier than it would otherwise have been. How did she know that he would keep to his resolve and sail when he said he would? Besides, what changes a week spent together might have wrought in both their lives! What right had she to deny him the sweet sorrow of that face-to-face parting? Then his sense of justice came forward and told him that he had no *claims;* and he cursed the prudish prudence which had so often kept him silent when he had been on the point of telling her how dear she was to him. At the same time he resented bitterly the fact that she did not

give him her present address, which excluded all possibility of his communicating with her.

His days had no sort of interest since there was no one waiting on the old, yellow sofa in the evening to hear how the day had been spent. He began to hate the sight of that empty sofa. Paris became oppressive, and he felt that he must leave the place which had suddenly become so cold, dull, and unsympathetic, so he decided to accept the invitation of some friends to visit them at their home in Dieppe. He had postponed from day to day taking his ticket for America, while every post brought him loving home letters asking for the date when they might begin to count the days that would bring him westward. He realized, too, that he was not so glad to go to the dear ones on the other side as he should be, and he blamed himself bitterly for this covert ingratitude.

His friends in Dieppe found him much

changed, and he felt so restless, distrait, and uneasy that he cut short his visit, with the excuse that he wished to see the Paris salon before sailing, and returned in time for the *vernissage* on the 1st of May. During the seven years that he had passed abroad Harold never failed to attend this exhibition of Parisian fashion as well as art, and latterly had always had some of his work exhibited. As he took his way down the leafy avenue of the Champs Elysées, he felt very differently from the other occasions he remembered, when he was all intent on seeing how his picture was placed.

He was too well known in the American colony not to meet many acquaintances. Many pleasant smiles and bows greeted him. Celebrities of every class were present—the President of the republic and the great figureheads of state; the great masters of literature and art—and these noted personages at first received more scrutiny from the crowd than the pictures that graced the

walls. Many of Harold's friends knew of his intended picture, and some had even seen the *ébauche.* There had been much wonder among themselves as to why it was not exhibited. One or two of the most intimate came forward and questioned him on the subject, but they met with such short rejoinders that they regretted their indiscretion.

"By Jove! I believe he presented it and was refused, he takes it so badly," said one of them.

Harold had come to take refuge among the pictures, and he felt in no humor to be jostled by the crowd and answer meaningless questions. He went frowningly on from room to room, when suddenly he came upon a group which so surrounded a picture "on the line" that he could not see it, even on tiptoe. The constant exclamations of admiration piqued his curiosity, and he determined to wait until he might have a view of it.

"Charming! *Charmant!*" came from all sides.

"If I were to decide the *medaille d'or*, it is here I should bestow it," said one. "What expression! What color! Why, it is life!"

By this time Harold had edged himself a little nearer to the picture; the curly auburn hair, the dove-like whiteness of the forehead, came into his range of vision. Surely there was but one forehead like that! Then he felt annoyed that he should be so weak as to find a resemblance to the object of his constant thought in the first picture he looked upon; but the more he saw of the picture, as he edged himself nearer, the stronger grew the resemblance, and although it was more piquant, laughing, merry than the face he knew and loved, it was unmistakably Beryl's. He grew more and more fascinated as he looked at it. He had lost, and had been seeking everywhere, a pale, sad, beautiful little face, and suddenly he was con-

fronted by the same face illumined with life, health, joy. She, then, had been like this once; and he realized more than ever how much there was of her life that he had never known, and he felt himself more than ever removed from her. He was now close to the picture, and read on the frame the title, "*La Fille du Soleil.*" He also deciphered the artist's name, "T. Clayton Sargent," in the corner of the canvas. The thought struck him that this artist might give him some information about her, and he was hunting in his catalogue for the painter's address, when some one tapped him on the shoulder, and he recognized the voice of a fellow-student at the *Académie Julian.*

"Hello, Bertram! admiring the chef-d'œuvre?" They shook hands cordially. "You know Sargent, of course?"

Harold admitted that he did not, but would enjoy the acquaintance of so talented an artist.

"Come, then," said the student, "I will

introduce you. Splendid fellow, Sargent, and made a deuced fine hit this time."

Harold followed him, no little excited, for he felt that he was making a step toward finding the original of the picture. They found Clay quite surrounded by a crowd of admiring friends who were congratulating him warmly, and his face was flushed with the pleasure of acknowledged success. Thus Harold had an opportunity of forming an opinion of the artist before being presented. The result of his observations was a pang of jealousy, not of his present ovation, but that he had been vouchsafed the privilege of painting Beryl, and that he probably now knew where she was, and saw her daily. He looked upon him as a rival, and credited him with all the attractions which jealous natures acknowledge in their rivals. The introduction over, the student noticed the absorbing interest with which Clay was regarded, and was pleased that his friend should awaken such admiration. He pro-

posed that Clay should lunch with them at the café below. To this he readily assented, and they were soon seated at one of the square marble tables, where they could enjoy the collection of statuary while they ate. They were a congenial trio, and found abundant subjects for conversation, of which the student and Clay did the larger share. Harold studied his rival closely, and always awaited his opportunity to speak of the subject nearest his heart. At last it came.

"I must forgo the coffee," said the student, consulting his watch. "I took holiday this morning to see the *vernissage*, but I am due at the academy now." So he hurriedly took leave, and left Harold and Clay tête-à-tête. Harold felt strangely constrained with Clay, and his ever-increasing jealousy added to his constraint. His opportunity had come, and he did not know how to use it.

The two men lit their cigars, which puts men on a friendly footing sooner than anything else.

"Do you exhibit this year, Mr. Bertram?" asked Clay, carelessly.

The question was unfortunate. Harold looked grave, and answered, "No." Then said something about being disappointed in his models, which Clay did not quite catch, but felt that he had not been happy in his choice of a subject, and was about to change it, when Harold said, in a tone which seemed to Clay a little satirical:

"I must congratulate you, Mr. Sargent, on having obtained so charming a model for your '*Fille du Soleil.*'"

"Yes," said Mr. Sargent, "I was indeed favored in my model. It was some time ago that she posed for me, but I could not get her consent to exhibit the picture until now."

"So," thought Bertram, "he sees her now," and he bit his lip with a consuming desire to throw aside all policy and demand as his right to know where she was. But he conquered this impulse, and said, quietly:

"I had the pleasure of knowing Miss

Carrington this winter," shaking the ashes from his cigar and trying to speak carelessly.

Clay started. "Ah, you know Beryl?"

Harold noted and resented the use of her Christian name.

"Yes, Miss Carrington has left Paris recently," Harold went on, hoping for an answer to the question he longed to ask, without asking it.

"Yes, poor girl, she has had a great deal to bear, and needed a change," said Clay, sympathetically.

"I am glad to see she has so good a friend," said Harold, piqued at the idea of knowing so much less about her than this stranger.

Something in the tone struck Clay, and caused him to look more narrowly at his companion. Harold felt the gaze, and reddened under it; but now that he had awakened suspicion, his good sense told him that he must speak openly, and a divining look at the honest, straightforward face opposite

him was sufficient to assure him that the utmost candor would be the best appeal here.

"Perhaps, Mr. Sargent, when I tell you that I not only knew Miss Carrington, but was honored by her friendship, you will not mind giving me her present address."

He felt so strongly the importance of the answer to him, that he turned pale as he put the question. His eagerness was not lost on Clay, who, in his desire to shield Beryl, misinterpreted it.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Bertram, but I am not authorized to do that. What! are you leaving?" as Harold rose to his feet.

"Yes," said Harold, who now uttered some excuses about being pressed for time by engagements prior to his immediate departure for America.

"Do you sail so soon, then?"

"To-morrow, on the 'Bretagne,'" he answered, firmly, for now his decision was final.

"I did not know you were leaving so

soon," said Clay, kindly. "I had hoped to see more of you."

Harold's feelings were somewhat mitigated, as Clay thrust his card into his hand and said, cordially:

"Come and see me whenever you are in Paris."

And as Harold hastily left the building, he put the card away carefully in his pocket-book. It was at least the address of the man who knew where she was, he thought, moodily.

CHAPTER XVI

CLAY sat quietly thinking for some time after the abrupt departure of his new acquaintance. That a man who had known Beryl should continue to entertain an interest in her did not surprise him, but he wondered that such manifold attractions should not have produced a like impression on her. He wondered that he had never heard

Beryl mention him, and then this very fact grew into important significance. He remembered vaguely that on her first visit to his studio, after their separation, she had spoken of her surroundings as being both congenial and pleasant,—of new friends and associations,—and, yes, he remembered her very few words now, "I have found, Clay, that true friendship can be a much nobler sentiment with a man than love." Could these words have referred to the man who had just quitted him? Poor Beryl! her experience of love had taught her to say this; but might not one who had taught her a high ideal in friendship be capable of elevating her ideas of love also? But he was soon joined by other friends, and thought no more about it. He had intended to get away in time to run down to St. Germain and spend the evening with Beryl, fearing she might be lonely; but he suddenly found himself famous on account of his picture, and so overwhelmed with invitations and ap-

pointments, that he could not get away until the following day, when he arrived in St. Germain about dusk, and wended his way immediately to the Hotel Louis XIV. He was warmly welcomed by Beryl, who, having been left alone, could not help living over recent events, with evil results to her rest and color. She looked somewhat pale and ill as she leaned back in her arm-chair near the window opening on the balcony, where Clay was smoking his cigar and trying to interest her in the furor which his picture was exciting in the Paris salon. But he could not arouse her from the listless manner she had acquired of late, and he noticed with pain how thin and white her hands looked when clasped on the dark folds of her dress. Perhaps these things impressed him the more that he came directly from that picture of health and happiness. Her thoughts did not seem quite with him even when she said, "I am indeed glad, Clay, that your work is so successful."

It was growing dark and cool. Beryl drew a soft white shawl about her shoulders and crossed the room to light a shaded lamp. Clay threw away the stump of his cigar and came inside.

"You are very cozy here, Beryl," he said, sinking into an arm-chair, and stretching out his long legs contentedly, as he remarked the many little home touches she had already given the room. "I hope you are going to be a good girl now and get strong again."

He felt uncommonly happy in this little room alone with Beryl, away from all the world. He had a pleasant feeling of proprietorship, and his wild thoughts pictured a temple such as this, with her as its priestess. The best of us are elated by success, and Clay's had been unprecedented. Every artist can understand the glow at the heart which comes with an acknowledgment from the public of his efforts after years of honest application. Clay loved his art for art's sake, and had exhibited very little. He was

a severe critic of his own work as well as the work of others, and often at the last moment decided not to send a picture to an exhibition because it did not reach his standard. His idealized portrait of Beryl had pleased him greatly at the time that he painted it, and when she consented to its being exhibited at this salon he was greatly interested to see if his high estimate of it had been correct; and now the enthusiasm of friends and masters convinced him that his reward had indeed come. It made all life seem brighter, and he began to ask himself why should not all things be possible, and the future stretch away before him a long vista of just such sweet joy as he was enjoying now, only deeper and more real? And yet there was nothing definite in these thoughts. All he asked was a continuation of the present, with the privilege of being her protector and of exercising his constant, never-failing devotion to her best interests. His was a nature that courted self-sacrifice.

He could be satisfied with so little, if only he might be allowed to give his all.

"By the way, Beryl, I saw a friend of yours yesterday."

A sudden light came into her eyes and a faint color into her wan cheeks, which Clay did not fail to remark.

"A friend of mine! May I ask who it was?"

"Certainly; an artist named Bertram. You remember him? We lunched together with another fellow at the salon café. He asked me for your address —"

"And you gave it?" There was a hushed eagerness in her tone, which Clay tried to interpret as her desire to remain unsought; but he failed lamentably. She leaned forward, her face beaming with a new animation, which transfigured it from the listlessness of a moment ago.

"And you gave it, Clay?" she repeated, as he did not answer, her eyes big with interrogation.

"No, I did not. I understood that you wished to remain quiet here," he said, sternly, in his unwillingness to acknowledge the truth, which for that reason all the more confronted him.

"O Clay!" She could say no more, but buried her face in her hands, and he never forgot the cruel disappointment in her tones or the reproach of her eyes. It was as clear as noonday to him now. *She loved this man, then.* If she had said it in so many pitiless words it could not have been plainer. He felt a sudden uncontrollable anger leap into his heart, and he rose, somewhat uncertain of himself, and went out on the balcony, where he strode up and down for some time, at first unconscious of everything except the mad jealousy that was consuming him, which was so new a sensation that he did not understand himself or it.

"Fool, fool that I was!" he muttered, thinking of his wild aspirations of an hour ago.

He fought a hard battle with self, but finally the strong, noble, generous nature asserted itself, and he mastered his passion. No one should ever know of his struggle — least of all the woman he had left absorbed in her own disappointment. Going back into the room, he went up to her and said, quite calmly, though still very pale:

"I am sorry, Beryl, if I did wrong, but how could I know that you made so great an exception of this man? I am sorry, but I cannot repair my fault, as he said he would sail for America immediately."

It was the confirmation of her worst fears, and she winced a little as she listened to it. So it was indeed all over, and she had not one chance left to change matters if she would. Her reason told her that this was what she had intended and often planned; but her heart could not reason, and cried out against the fate that had closed around her.

Then a glance at Clay's face told her that he too was suffering, that in some way she

had wounded him, and her old impulsive nature swayed her again. She caught his hand as he stood beside her chair, and pressed her soft cheek against it. "You must not worry about it, dear," she urged; "he — he was a good friend, that was all. Let us say no more about it." Her voice trembled just a little, but she tried to smile bravely. She exerted herself greatly after this, and even tried to be gay; but a shadow had fallen on Clay which none of her efforts could dispel.

A word sent forth cannot be recalled, and an impression once engraved on our minds, especially when unwelcome, is fixed forever.

CHAPTER XVII

HAROLD'S sea-voyage on board the "Bretagne" was always regarded in the retrospect of his after-life as a time of severe trial. He had no sooner lost sight of the shores of France than an intense longing to be back took possession of him. During the six beautiful, sunshiny days of

his passage he walked the deck almost incessantly, with a cigar and his own thoughts for companionship. He acknowledged that although his life had been singularly happy and free from care, the best part of it were the hours spent in sweet communion with his "little affinity," as he called Beryl. No one else had so thoroughly entered into his thoughts and feelings, and understood him as he wished to be understood. He longed for her inexpressibly as he stood in the moonlight watching the phosphorescent lights dance in the water below. Her strong personality influenced him always, and he could so readily recall her figure, her gestures, her voice, that he preferred to fancy her replies and expressions in regard to his thoughts, rather than the actual companionship of any one on board.

Sometimes the thought of her with others, and particularly with Clay, became an actual pain, and he counted the hours impatiently when the excitement of landing and

throwing himself into his old interests could help to obliterate these thoughts.

After the fêtes with which Harold's family commemorated his home-coming were over, it was decided that he should locate in New York. This city, which had possessed no charm for him before his sojourn abroad, now appealed to him more than any other in America, as offering the closest approach to the life he had left in Paris.

In meeting again the friends of his youth in New England he did not experience that warmth of heart he had expected which comes from genuine sympathy, but felt that he had been dropped among a lot of people of his own age whom he had suddenly outgrown — that he had made great strides away from them, while they had been standing still. He found himself strangely out of tune with the commercial element which makes itself so strongly felt in American society, while the social whirl,

which demanded so much of his time, bored him.

He felt rather relieved than otherwise when he turned his back on Boston to identify himself with the great metropolis.

His mother and sister accompanied him, as they could not lose sight of him so soon; and Edith felt that she must help in the selection of the studio as well as enjoy the privilege of introducing her handsome brother to her girl friends in New York.

The first few days Harold spent in looking up "the boys," who had left Paris before him, and recalling gaily the old academy days, rehearsing many amusing anecdotes, and talking over the art outlook in the New World. He visited all the studio buildings, and at last decided on a large one in Fifty-ninth Street, overlooking Central Park. He knew a great many people in New York, and when he had called on all his mother's and sister's friends he found his list lengthened almost indefinitely, and invitations for din-

ners, receptions, balls, and teas poured in on him *ad nauseam*, until he wondered how a fellow ever found any time to work in New York. At first he found the whirl rather amusing as a study, and his friends told him that the "society dodge" was a necessary part of the "pose" that the artist was expected to make. But it soon palled on him. Indeed, the society girls who attempted to lionize the rising young artist found him very untractable, and complained that in the midst of their most brilliant sallies his eyes looked quite past them into space, as if his own thoughts pictured something more to his taste than their actual charms.

To Harold the society mill in which he found himself plunged was interesting only from the standpoint of a critic at a play, and he never thought of himself as one of the actors.

There were times when the longing to escape from those around him, so busy in

their endless strivings after petty ends, was so great that he would steal away and take long strolls in Central Park alone with his beloved Nature in her charming spring dress. Amid the leafy avenues of this loveliest of parks he felt less alone than in the uncongenial atmosphere of some of the gorgeous drawing-rooms in which he was so welcome.

He was tired of the incessant round of entertainments which policy and politeness demanded that he should attend. The people he met had no feeling for art, but seemed to him to be working hard all the time at a game of pleasure which did not impress him as being worth the candle. Constantly, too, he was confronted by the image of a pale little face with pathetic lapis-lazuli eyes; and he would have given every pleasure he had enjoyed since his arrival for another hour on the old-gold sofa at the Pension Sanderson with Beryl.

Warm weather was fast approaching, and the Bertram family were already preparing

to leave the city for their cottage at Manchester-by-the-Sea, where they expected to entertain a gay party.

Edith had been disappointed that her brother had not succumbed to the charms of some of her friends; but she had reserved her *grand coup* for the last, and was anticipating much pleasure in introducing to him this summer her Wellesley College roommate, whom she already dreamed of as a possible sister. Imagine her chagrin, then, when Harold announced at dinner one evening that he had met Thorp, his Harvard chum, at the club that day, and had accepted an invitation to visit him at his hunting-box in the Rangeley Lakes. However, she was appeased when he promised to join them a little later at the cottage and bring Thorp with him.

After the New York whirl, Harold found the rest and quiet of the primeval forest of Maine delightful. Thorp was an old, tried

friend as well as a congenial companion, with a quick, ready intellect, discernment, and sufficient sentiment to feel and love this magnificent solitude as a poet or an artist. Their days were spent in hunting, fishing, and rowing on the lake, with a daily plunge in its limpid waters. Their evenings were divided between smoking, reading, musing, and talking in the great dining-room, which had constituted the original camp, but as time went on a kitchen had been added and two bedrooms above, while the big room did duty as a dining-room, library, and smoking-room.

Here, amid the grandeur of nature, whether sketching alone or floating with his friend on the bosom of the placid hill-locked lake, Harold was a prey to his old heart-longings, which would not down at his bidding, and the yearning to have Beryl with him became almost unbearable.

One evening the friends were smoking together as usual. The windows on the lake

were all open, but a bright fire of logs burned on the hearth, which still felt comfortable after nightfall. Harold was sitting in a great rocking-chair, with one leg thrown over the arm, puffing away at his cigar. His eyes followed Thorp's movements as he strode about the room, then he fell into a reverie of Paris. Somehow the uncertain light of the fire recalled the Pension Sanderson, and his fancy began to recall Beryl sitting in the firelight, as he had so often seen her. He could remember just how her auburn hair caught the glow of the fire, and her firm white throat rose from her dark dress with a Henner effect. He even pictured the lines of her exquisite little pink ear, and a little curl that guarded it, as he had seen the firelight touch it.

"By Jove, Bertram, come and see this effect," said Thorp, stopping at a window which looked toward Mount Washington, behind which the splendid summer moon appeared, and its long rays just touched the

quiet surface of the lake. "There's a picture for you!" he enthused. "See that greenish yellowish light on the tiny cloud to the left. Great Scott! I'd like to paint that myself."

"I wonder you were not an artist, Thorp," said Bertram, taking in the beauty of the scene over his friend's shoulder. "You have so much artist's feeling for color in nature."

Thorp continued his walk and his cigar. "An artist—humph! I might have been, perhaps, but for my association with a fellow in my youth who was art crazy, and who bored me with his incessant talk about Rembrandts and Velasquezes. By the way, Bertram, I wonder if you ever knew that fellow in Paris. Had a romance there, I have heard, and a tragic death—shot himself somewhere in the Latin Quarter, poor devil, because a beautiful American girl jilted him. Such fools some men are! They say he pursued the poor girl unmercifully. How a man can kill himself for a

woman who does not care for him is what I can't understand," he finished, impressively.

"I fear there are many such cases in Paris," said Harold, coming over to the fireplace to shake the ashes from his cigar. "What was the fellow's name?"

"Georges Latour. His father was French, I believe."

"Latour! Why, I met him, and he did me the favor to pose for me several times for my Donatello." And Harold frowned, as he always did when he recalled that picture. "I did not know what had become of him. Poor Latour! — so that was his end. Well, he seemed in a pretty desperate mood when I knew him. Did you hear the girl's name?" he asked, idly.

"Yes, I did hear it. Let me see — it began with a C — Carroll — or — no, it was Carrington."

Harold started, and faced Thorp. "Can you be sure about the name, Thorp?" he asked, huskily.

"Yes, I am sure it was Carrington — a Southern girl — awfully pretty, they say. Have a light, old fellow; your cigar is out."

"No, thank you, Thorp, I think I will leave you now," and Harold turned his face from the firelight, glad to avoid his friend's scrutiny.

"Perhaps you had better go to bed; we want to get at the trout-fishing early to-morrow morning. They always bite better before the sun is high. Good-night."

Harold went to his room, but not to bed. He sat long by the window in the moonlight, pondering over the story he had just heard; and as he reviewed his intercourse with Beryl in the light of this knowledge, he understood her as he had never done before. That scene in his studio which had so perplexed him, which he had forgiven because he did not know how to refuse her tears, but which had ever rankled in his mind as an unexplained mystery, was now, when he least expected it, made plain.

"O my darling," he muttered, "why did you not trust me, and save us both all this suffering?"

But too much time had been wasted already. He would go to her at once and tell her all the impassioned love that was yearning in his heart for her. But where was she? He remembered with a pang that he did not know; then a sudden inspiration came to him that he had the address of a man who did, and he could write him. He drew the card Clay had given him in the salon café from his pocketbook, and began his letter to Beryl at once.

It was so hard to make pen and paper capable of telling all the pent-up devotion which was firing his heart, and adequately express the great need he had for her as his wife, that it was far in the night before it was finished and addressed, like the honest, straightforward letter which accompanied it for Clay. He wrote to him as man to man, explaining frankly his position, and begged

him to give the inclosed letter to Beryl, whom he had asked to be his wife.

When these letters were on their way to France Harold felt happier. His fever of longing had changed to a fever of impatience.

CHAPTER XVIII

CLAY never forgot the revelation of that first evening in Beryl's little lamp-lit sitting-room, and rejoiced that he had not revealed his secret to her, and that the old natural relationship might continue.

The weather was lovely now, and Beryl began to improve perceptibly in the sweet, fresh air of St. Germain. She spent most

of her time out-of-doors, and with returning health came a desire to go on with her artistic work, so long laid aside. One afternoon when Clay arrived at St. Germain earlier than usual, he found Beryl eagerly sketching in water-colors the view from the window.

"O Clay, I am so glad to see you!" she cried. "Come and take down my vanity. I am so pleased to be doing anything again that I have been getting conceited. Tell me this is very bad, or I shall be stupid enough to think it good."

Clay smiled as he came up and glanced over her shoulder.

"Bravo!" he exclaimed. "You have not been retrograding at all, Beryl. That distance is fine."

"You don't mean it! You are laughing at me," she said, puckering her forehead.

"But I do mean it; and I tell you what I 'll do, Beryl. If you like, I 'll bring out my colors, and we can go sketching together, and criticize each other."

"It will be lovely! When shall we begin?" cried Beryl, clapping her hands. "But I would never aspire to criticizing you, *mon grand maitre.*"

Thus a course was planned which brought much happiness to them both, but in widely different ways. Clay was the gentlest, if the most conscientious, of teachers, and Beryl was so delighted to be again progressing in her art that her enthusiasm was unbounded.

To Clay, who now came three times a week to St. Germain, these sketching expeditions held a sweetness which often tempted his best resolutions, and he could only keep back the declaration which rushed madly to his lips by recalling to mind his knowledge of her true feelings for another. However, as she never alluded to Harold Clay began to hope that she did not think of him, and dared to ask himself if time and separation might not lessen her love, and the constant presence of a sublime devotion finally triumph. Time meant nothing to him in

the face of such a possibility. But it was rare that he indulged in such thoughts, and he never allowed his actions to depart from those of a truly devoted friend. But the struggle with himself which he fought out on the little balcony had to be met and combated over and over. The first rage of bitterness had subsided into a dull ache, but none the less existed. Beryl was too unconscious of his feelings or too absorbed in her own to notice this. She loved, admired, honored him, and treated him with that unrestrained good-fellowship that had ever existed between them. Sometimes her very unconscious freedom tried him sorely. Nothing could have better assured him that her heart was not in his keeping than the naturalness of her sisterly kindness.

She often felt discouraged physically, and in spite of her great desire to progress in her art, would have to forego the sketching lesson, as she felt too weak and out of sorts to work at anything, and would lie for hours in

a reclining-chair on the balcony, breathing in the sweet, pure air of early summer, holding the last book Clay had brought her in her lap. It was the contentment of resignation rather than happiness she had gained, and her eyes had a far-away look that denoted her thoughts were not with the present surroundings. Beryl had indeed thought a great deal since she had been alone at St. Germain. She realized now her great love for Harold, and the thousands of watery miles that rolled between them. She knew that the sweetest chapter of her life had closed with his departure, and that it was closed forever. But Beryl had suffered so much that she began to think that a good deal of it had been her own fault. In looking back she saw so many follies that might have been avoided, and she was prepared to bear her present sorrow in the loss of Harold as a part of her punishment. The influence of her friend while with her had been so elevating to her whole nature that she felt a

kind of pleasure in going on with the work that he had begun, and making of Beryl Carrington a woman such as Harold had taught her to admire. She resolved first to get well *for his sake*, to work hard at her art *for his sake*, to be prudent and wise and good and true *for his sake*. It was not the loftiest incentive, but it was all-sufficient in her case, and some time, somehow, in his far-away Northern home, news would come to him of his little friend of one winter in Paris, and she would see to it that it should be good news of improvement. Then he would be pleased.

These thoughts and resolutions formed the occupation of one fine morning spent on the terrace which overlooks the valley of the Seine—the beautiful river, winding among green fields with the tile-roofed cottages dotted here and there, forming one of the most beautiful views in all France.

She had felt quite brave, and able to ac-

complish all these resolutions; but as she strolled back to the hotel, with no less commonplace object than to get her noon lunch, and realized how far from strong she was still, she felt very discouraged. How much time that would pass quickly and even pleasantly if she could only work, must be spent in that greater trial of waiting for strength! She felt very tired and bored with this endless routine of life as she entered her room; and there on her little lace-draped bureau lay something destined to put an end to all its routine — to change her destiny and open a new world — a key to the best happiness that her longing heart could picture. She had but to lay her hands on these two letters, lying confidingly together, to break the seals and enter into the joys set before her. They were both postmarked Paris, and both were addressed in Clay's well-known hand. She sat down wonderingly, as she had not seen Clay for several days, and read:

DEAR BERYL: I send you a letter which it is my duty to deliver, but I am not brave enough to watch your face as you read it. I believe the writer to be a high-minded gentleman. May God help you to do right. CLAY.

She broke the other seal, which revealed another envelope in a handwriting which made her heart leap to suffocation.

It was postmarked Portland, Maine.

CHAPTER XIX

WHEN Clay had dispatched that fatal letter to Beryl he had surrendered all he held most dear in life. He had been compelled to hold his fate in his own hands, to be his own doomsman, and he felt irritated that fortune had not even spared him this; but his noble heart never hesitated as to what course to pursue.

But now his suffering nature demanded change. "Beryl has no further need for me," he thought, bitterly, and he arranged to meet some friends at St. Ives, off the coast of Cornwall, England, and get in some summer sketching. He wrote to Beryl telling her of his intention, and asking her to fix a day when he might come and bid her goodby, as he would not return before October. He was not surprised when her answer announced her intention of leaving for America almost immediately, and proposing that as he was about to go north he should make the crossing at Havre, to which place she would be glad to share his journey, as she had arranged to sail from there on the "Champagne" the following Saturday; and she added that it would be pleasant to see the face of so faithful a friend among the last her eyes rested on in the Old World, "for I sail to a New World and a new life." She wrote to him freely of the contents of her precious letter that had induced this

home-coming. She was so full of her happiness that it bubbled over in her long letter to Clay. It was a relief to tell some one, although in an undefined way she felt that Clay would not be so glad as she could wish, and that it was easier to tell him of her happiness this way than when his clear, quiet gray eyes were upon her.

So it was arranged, and a sunshiny day in July found them speeding northward in the confines of a gray-lined first-class carriage of the *Chemin de fer de l'Oust*, which reminded Beryl of Aunt Dora's old carriage in Virginia.

With very different feelings they sped through the fields of wheat and poppies, the long rows of clipped trees and green hedgerows, the red-tiled roofs and the blue-bloused peasants at work. Conversation lagged. Beryl was absorbed in her new happiness, and Clay battling with a lost hope. Happiness, that greatest ally to health and beauty, had lent a new luster to her cheeks

and eyes. Clay notes all this with tightening heartstrings, and looks out the window on the smiling fields, and calls himself a selfish fellow that he cannot enter freely into another's joy. Then he wonders how it would feel to be in Harold's place waiting for the certain, quick possession of so much happiness. But these are useless thoughts, and he turns his attention to selecting the many paintable bits that fly past the window.

Beryl meanwhile attributes his silence to the fact that he regrets to lose his little friend and protégée. But then was he not planning to leave her? and she turns her thoughts to the great subject — her homegoing. Thus they reached Rouen, and half their journey was done. Clay got out and returned with heaps of strawberries in great green leaves, which an old peasant woman was vending at the station. They ate them together and became more sociable, chatting much, as if this were one of the old excur-

sions that they had enjoyed, and not their very last together. Clay hid his feelings so cleverly that the restraint quite vanished from their conversation. They had taken the early train from Paris, in order that Beryl might have time to rest at Havre before her steamer sailed, at seven in the evening; but she seemed so bright and well that after they had lunched at the quiet little Hotel d'Angleterre, where the host insisted on calling Beryl "Madame Sargent," they drove to Frascati's, which every one in and about Havre well knows. The music, the gay people seated at little tables, drinking their beer, wine, or absinthe, and watching the waves as they play along the shore, is a mild imitation of what is going on at fashionable Trouville, which can be plainly recognized across the water. The free life and Bohemian atmosphere of the place pleased Beryl, and she and Clay sat a long time playing with their beer-mugs and watching the life around them. Dear,

sunny, giddy France! She was to sail away from it all at seven o'clock. How sentimental she would have grown over this thought once, and now how glad, how very glad, she was to go. Our regrets at leaving a place are always more modified by what the change offers than by anything it has been to us in the past.

They took a long stroll up and down the jetty, watching the waves dash themselves against the strong breakwater, and the white gulls flitting like moving bits of flake white against the restless ultramarine background. Clay had pointed out so much that was beautiful. His life was spent not only in finding the beautiful himself, but presenting it to others. The wind was very strong on the jetty, and Beryl drew her arm through his quite naturally. "Dear Clay," she murmured, "how I shall miss you." Miss *him!* Oh no, no, he did not believe that.

"You have walked a great deal, Beryl," he said, surprised at her strength. "Don't

you think we had better go back to the hotel?"

"You always know when I am tired better than I do myself. I am very tired, but I did not know it until now," she said.

She was pale and quiet during their return drive to the hotel, and as they found the dreary *salon au première* deserted she threw herself on the sofa, saying, "There, Clay, sit down at the piano and improvise for me as you used to do."

He gladly gratified her, and for a time she listened appreciatively; then the din of the Rue de Paris outside and the music grew fainter and fainter: the fatigue and the sea-air had conquered.

Clay went on and on; then "Do you remember how old Barry used to sing this?" he said, rattling off a Bohemian song. Getting no reply, he turned on the stool, and discovered that his audience was asleep. He sat still, looking at her — smiling at the old Bohemian naturalness confronting him

again. It recalled so much, especially that last dreadful night in the studio when he had watched the hours go by and fought out one of his hardest battles with self. He had won then, but now the struggle came back anew. She was leaving him forever. He loved her so, and he was deliberately surrendering her to another. He felt dizzy as he mastered the desperate temptation to take her to his heart for just this once — for the last, last time. He wondered why life was so cruel — why the dearest things must ever be relinquished!

In the mean time, time the relentless was going steadily by; and, glancing at his watch, he saw that he must awaken her, as there was only time for table d'hôte before going on board the "Champagne." What a blessing, after all, is the staid matter of fact that lays its commonplace hand on all sentiment and says, "*Attend to me first.*"

It is over now — the hurry, the rush, the weeping relations, the flowers, the last words,

the drawing in of the plank that makes the first visible separation; and before Clay can realize it, he is standing on the jetty, where they last walked together, with the memory of two cold little hands that had clung to his until he had himself put them away and groped his way down the gangway. He is straining his eyes until the vessel passes through the *avant port*, to catch the fluttering of a white handkerchief; then it grows fainter, the great black hull with its waving column of smoke, which soon changes to a black speck. People have left one by one, until Clay stands alone on the great jetty, with the waves sobbing at his feet. Blindly he makes his way back through the merry streets, so repulsive to him in their unfeeling mirth, to the Hotel d'Angleterre. He enters the deserted little salon. His eyes seek the sofa, and there in the corner is the pillow, still bearing the impress of a sunny brown head, a round hole where the dear head had so recently rested. Then his

great, brave heart gives way, and, throwing himself on his knees, he buries his face in the pillow, crying, "How I loved! O God, how I loved her!"

* * * * *

Seven days at sea! With Beryl, seven long, happy days to lie indolently on the bosom of the great deep, gazing into the infinite blue, and thinking dreamily of her love, and of the new life to which she was returning.

Seven days to try and realize all the untold blessings that had come to her, and to get used to the idea of possessing at last her heart's desire.

Finally the last day had really come. The pilot climbed on board, and soon land was in sight. As the grand harbor of New York with its many inlets and rivers stretched out before her, bathed in the warm glow of a summer sunset, Beryl truly felt that she was not only returning to a new life, but to a different world from that which she had gladly quitted three years before.

This golden sunset with the gathering purple mists of evening turned the wide bay into a glittering fairy sea, the great brick warehouses and grain elevators into a semblance of castles and towers.

No; it was not the same cold, inartistic, business-like America, for as a warm smile of welcome came this summer sunset greeting to Beryl.

When at last the great ocean monster described a superb semicircle and approached the dock, Beryl looked in vain among the upturned faces at the pier's end for the face she longed to see. The ship drew nearer and nearer, creaking and grinding against the wooden pier as several noisy tugs pushed her into dock.

Beryl's heart was beating in wild suspense. From the promenade deck which towered high above the pier she continued to search with straining eyes.

Suddenly her ear caught the word "Darling," uttered in tender accents which she

knew so well. Yes, there he stood just below her, upon the very brink of the pier, unmindful of creaking hawsers, shouting sailors, or danger. His arms are extended yearningly upward — dear, loving arms that are to enfold her for always. His uplifted eyes are speaking to her — his lips say "Come!"